



OLD!

THE *Ultimate* RETRO

COLLECTION

From the
makers of
retro
GAMER

Digital
Edition

MOVIES THAT DEFINED A GENERATION

LEGENDARY TOYS AND VIDEOGAMES

ICONIC MUSICIANS AND ALBUMS

FUTURE

FOURTH
EDITION

Welcome to

THE

Ultimate

RETRO

COLLECTION

Saturday morning cartoons. 8-bit videogames. Hefty plastic action figures. If any of these things are stirring up fond memories then you've come to the right place. The Ultimate Retro Collection is a celebration of the movies, music, toys and pop culture that defined so many childhoods around the world. From Star Wars and Transformers, to Sesame Street and the Smurfs, this bookazine is packed with enthusiastic tributes and stunning photography of some of the world's favourite retro paraphernalia. Join us as we embark on a serious nostalgia trip, and rediscover some of the greatest items, characters and moments of yesteryear.



THE *Ultimate* **RETRO** COLLECTION

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retro GAMER

bookazine series

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STEVEN SPIELBERG Presents
BACK TO THE FUTURE
A ROBERT ZEMECKIS Film

"He was never in time for his classes...
He wasn't in time for his dinner...
Then one day...
he wasn't in his time at all."

"BACK TO THE FUTURE" stars MICHAEL J. FOX
CHRISTOPHER LLOYD - LEA THOMPSON - CRISPIN GLOVER
Produced by ALAN SILVESTRI
Directed by STEVEN SPIELBERG
Screenplay by BOB GALE - NEIL CANTON
Story by BOB GALE - NEIL CANTON
Music by ROBERT ZEMECKIS
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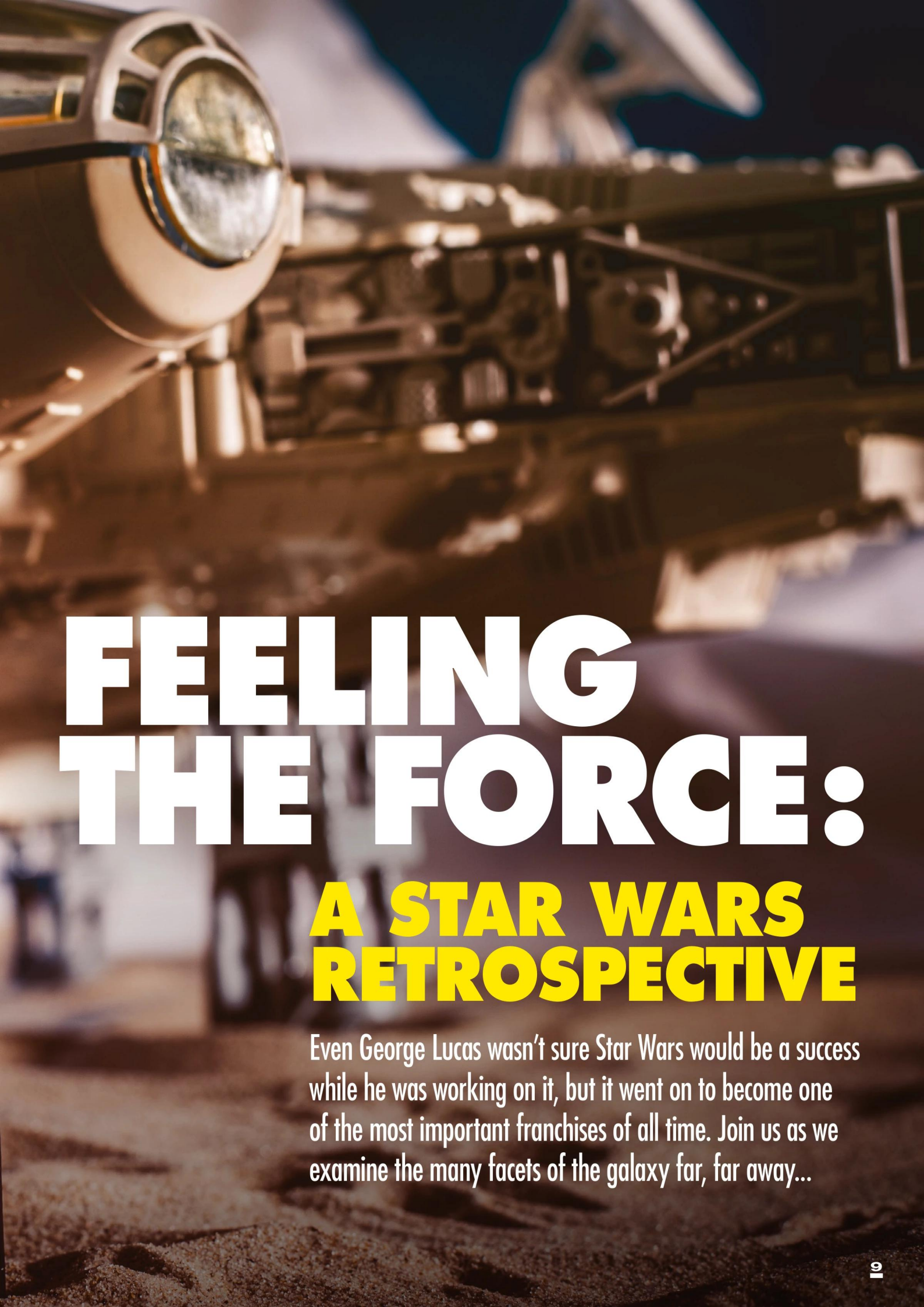
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FEELING THE FORCE:

A STAR WARS RETROSPECTIVE

Even George Lucas wasn't sure Star Wars would be a success while he was working on it, but it went on to become one of the most important franchises of all time. Join us as we examine the many facets of the galaxy far, far away...

With *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* recently released to rave reviews and excitement building for the upcoming *Episode IX*, it's hard to imagine that George Lucas's original idea for his epic space saga was passed over by several big film companies. Nevertheless that's exactly what happened, with Universal Pictures, United Artists and (ironically) Disney all passing on the proposed project before 20th Century Fox finally gave it the green light.

Star Wars is now one of the biggest movie franchises in the world, and it helped turn the likes of Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford and the late Carrie Fisher into household names. Its tremendous impact in 1977 helped create what's now known as the 'Summer Blockbuster' and it has become a huge part of our pop culture, referenced in countless films and TV shows. Relentless reissues have ensured that the movies continue to inspire new generations and you'll see just as many kids today pretending to use the Force to move things as they did during the late Seventies and early Eighties.

When Ben Kenobi told Luke Skywalker about the Force, he explained that "it surrounds us and penetrates us; it binds the galaxy together." That could equally apply to the love that fans feel for the Star Wars franchise itself. For many, Star Wars is not just a set of movies, it's a code of conduct to live by. In a 2002 New Zealand survey, 53,000 residents – 1.5 per cent of the county's population – stated their religion as Jedi. Even if it was just in jest, it highlights the sheer reach of Lucas's franchise.

Star Wars extends far beyond its core movies too. Lucas created a tremendously expansive universe that saw novels, cartoons and even videogames build upon the galaxy that he first dreamt up in the Seventies. Talented writers like Timothy Zahn and R.A. Salvatore expanded the universe massively at the beginning of the Nineties, killing off popular characters while resurrecting others. And the mythology only grew with time, eventually becoming so confusing that Disney decided that the 'Expanded Universe' would be considered non-canon going forward.

We've now come full circle, with the successful revival of the Star Wars brand in *The Force Awakens* restoring it to the very forefront of pop culture once again. Join us now, as we look at the many aspects of George Lucas's vision that have helped turn Star Wars into one of the most successful franchises the galaxy has ever known.



Obi-Wan Kenobi with a hologram in *Star Wars*

FILMS

Star Wars sprang from Lucas's desire to create another classic sci-fi franchise

For many, the original Star Wars trilogy represents the pinnacle of George Lucas's career. They have a heart and soul that were largely missing from his three later movies and were demonstrably made by a visionary director who would stop at nothing to ensure that his planned trilogy was as uncompromised as possible. And yet, if it weren't for THX 1138, the trilogy and everything that came after may never have happened.

While his THX 1138 debut movie wasn't as successful on release as Lucas had hoped, it did lead to a two-picture development deal with United Artists. One of those films would be *American Graffiti*, the other was to be based on *Flash Gordon*. Lucas was unable to obtain the rights, however, and so simply decided to make his own Flash Gordon-style movie instead. Unfortunately, studios weren't keen to buy into his vision, and he went through several before eventually landing a deal with 20th Century Fox.

Filming *Star Wars* wouldn't be easy, however. Lucas had continual disputes with his cinematographer Gilbert Taylor and had to rely heavily on his own special effects company, Industrial Light & Magic, due to Fox having disbanded its own studio. Filming at Elstree Studios in London had strict working conditions that Lucas wasn't used to and many of the crew didn't take the project seriously.





Even Harrison Ford has been famously quoted as saying “You can type this shit, George, but you can’t say it.” Lucas was diagnosed with exhaustion and hypertension while Mark Hamill had a car accident which affected re-shoots.

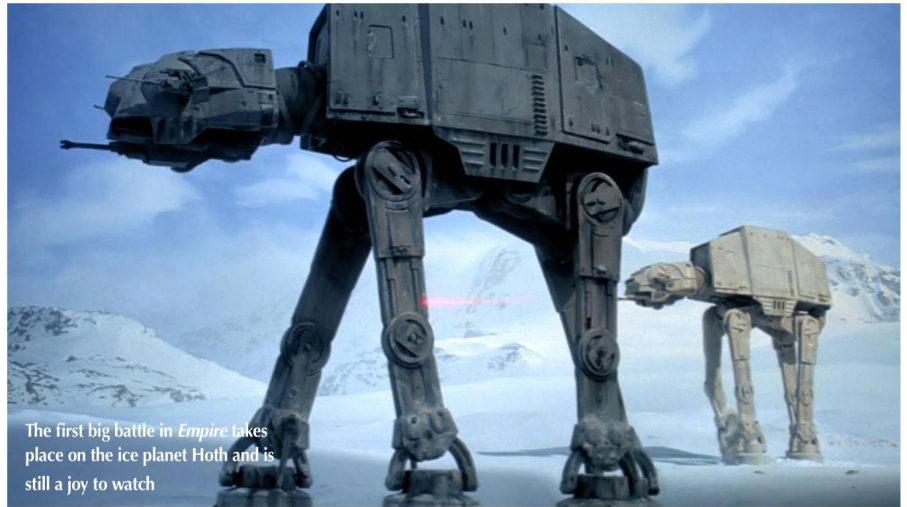
Post-production was no better, with early cuts of the film not pleasing Lucas and Industrial Light & Magic struggling to create the ground-breaking special effects.

When an early cut was screened to Fox officials and several high-ranking directors – including Steven Spielberg and Brian De Palma – the screening divided the audience, and Lucas eventually found himself compromising on his original vision, in large part due to the project already being

\$2 million over budget.

All the pain was worth it, though, for when *Star Wars* launched in 1977, it hit with all the power and precision of Luke Skywalker’s final assault on the Death Star. It was met with a rapturous reception, even if it wasn’t the most original of stories – it was heavily inspired by the Japanese classic *The Hidden Fortress* – and it broke box office records. It was so wildly successful, it led to a sequel, *The Empire Strikes Back*, which arrived three years later, in 1980.

Even today, *Empire* is widely considered to be the best movie in the Star Wars canon.



The first big battle in *Empire* takes place on the ice planet Hoth and is still a joy to watch

“Even today, *Empire* is widely considered to be the best movie in the Star Wars canon”

While Lucas still created the original story, he passed directing duties over to Irvin Kershner, whose last film had been *The Eyes Of Laura Mars*. Leigh Brackett and Lawrence Kasdan produced the sparkling screenplay and as a result it’s a far snappier film than its predecessor, building on the relationships Lucas hinted at in *Star Wars* and delivering countless lines of memorable dialogue. It was technically astonishing, too, with incredible state-of-the-art effects (it’s telling that the Yoda of *Empire* feels far more realistic than his later CGI incarnations) and one of the greatest cliff-hangers of all time.

Return Of The Jedi followed three years after *Empire*. Kasden continued to polish Lucas’s story and it concludes the original trilogy in a satisfying manner, particularly by featuring one of the greatest space battles ever committed to celluloid. Directed by the late Richard Marquand, additions such as the Ewoks led many to cynically suggest that the film was more a way of expanding Lucas’s successful toy merchandising, which was making obscene amounts of money. Cash-in or not, *Jedi* was a fitting end to the trilogy, and like *Star Wars* and *Empire* before it, it still holds up incredibly well today.



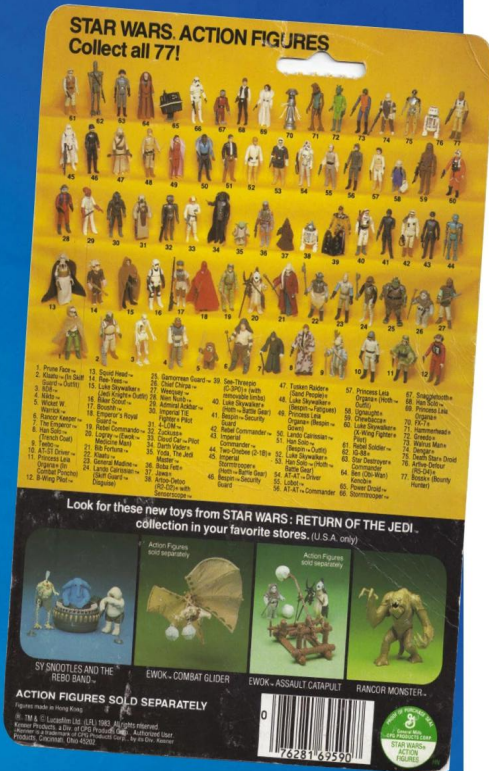
Jedi was originally going to feature Chewbacca’s home planet, but Lucas instead chose to introduce the cute Ewoks



TOYS

We revisit the origins behind the classic Star Wars toys we all enjoyed as kids





Even before George Lucas sold Lucasfilm to Disney for \$4.06bn, he was incredibly wealthy. When Lucas first began pitching *Star Wars*, he also had the idea to create a successful merchandising brand to go alongside it.

Lucas eventually received an offer from Kenner. While its president Bernie Loomis saw an opportunity, particularly for 3.75-inch figures, he, like everyone else, was caught completely by surprise by the brand's success. Always the shrewd business negotiator, Lucas passed up an extra \$500,000 for a director's fee to keep control of the merchandising and licensing business. The move would end up costing Fox billions.

Kenner began to panic towards the end of 1977 when it realised how successful *Star Wars* was because it had no toys ready for the lucrative Christmas period. As a result, it opted to sell a redeemable voucher called The Early Bird Certificate which would allow kids to send off for Chewbacca, Princess Leia, Luke Skywalker and R2-D2 when the figures were available the following year. Kenner sold 500,000 vouchers at \$7.99 apiece. The *Star Wars* toy line had begun...

Eight additional figures joined the original four, including Han Solo, Ben Kenobi, Darth Vader, C-3PO and Jawa. Several playsets and vehicles were also released at the end of the Seventies, including the Millennium Falcon, TIE Fighter, Landspeeder and Death Star. The Leicestershire-based toy company Palitoy would win the rights to releasing *Star Wars* toys in the UK and even introduced variations that weren't found in the original Kenner brand, with its cardboard and now highly coveted Death Star being one of the most notable examples.

"Lucas passed up an extra \$500,000 for a director's fee to keep control of the merchandising"

Kenner's new toy line generated over \$100 million in its first year alone and the range continued to generate millions more as additional toys and ever-more elaborate playsets were released. Clever mail-order promotions like the ability to buy an early version of Boba Fett if you sent in four proof-of-purchase stamps would continue to generate excitement, while the new films generated further momentum, introducing extra figures, playsets and vehicles like the AT-AT and Ewok Village.

In total, Kenner released around 100 action figures during a nine-year period, giving full-set collectors plenty to aim for. As the brand wound down in 1985, Kenner began releasing toys under a new brand called Power Of

The Force, which included a special collector's coin.

In addition to repackaging many older figures, 15 final figures were added, from a carbonite-encased Han Solo to Luke Skywalker in his Stormtrooper get-up, all of which can now fetch huge prices on the collector's market.

Ten years after the original *Star Wars* range ended, Hasbro/Kenner resurrected the toy line in 1995 with a range of better-detailed but more muscular figures (possibly in response to the successful Masters Of The Universe range), though the uglier style would be toned down. As well as remoulding several classic figures, they also renamed many to tie in with characters from the new 'Expanded Universe'. The range remained popular for five years, eventually finishing in 2000.





The collecting is strong in this one...

Matt Fox tells us about his impressive collection



When were you first introduced to Star Wars toys?

I was five years old when I saw *Star Wars* in '77 and it also marked my first ever

trip to a cinema – a double whammy on my young mind that soon became a triple whammy when the toys showed up at my local Woolworths, too. All I ever wanted for birthdays and Christmas were Star Wars toys, and I'd pore over the card backs and the product catalogues that showed the full figure line. On the reverse of each card back was the statement 'Collect them all', and I'm still trying to obey that simple command to this day!

When did you seriously start collecting Star Wars toys?

When the Special Edition returned to the cinema in 1997, it prompted me to

rummage in my parents' loft and reclaim my old box of Star Wars toys. When I opened that box, I was hit full-force by the golden glow of nostalgia – it was like the scene from *Pulp Fiction* when they look in the case! I had seen the light, and I really became an 'adult collector' from that moment on.

What's the crown jewel of your collection and why?

One of the very earliest items released in the vintage toy line was an 'action display stand' – a slick-looking grey stand with 12 foot pegs for the first 12 figures to proudly stand upon. This was reissued three years later to accompany *The Empire Strikes Back*, now in a new blood red box, with the iconic ESB logo, and most crucially containing six figures sealed in individual baggies. This reissued stand is beyond rare, with seemingly fewer than ten known to exist. I'm very proud to have one in my collection.

Tell us a little about your exhibition, May The Toys Be With You?

May The Toys Be With You is a collection of vintage Star Wars toys and original movie posters. It's a beautifully presented and curated sci-fi exhibition that is touring museums around the UK. It's powerful nostalgia for those who lived through that era, but also really exciting and visual for new and young Star Wars fans too. The movie poster collection is particularly definitive.

What advice would you give to anyone who is interested in starting their own collection?

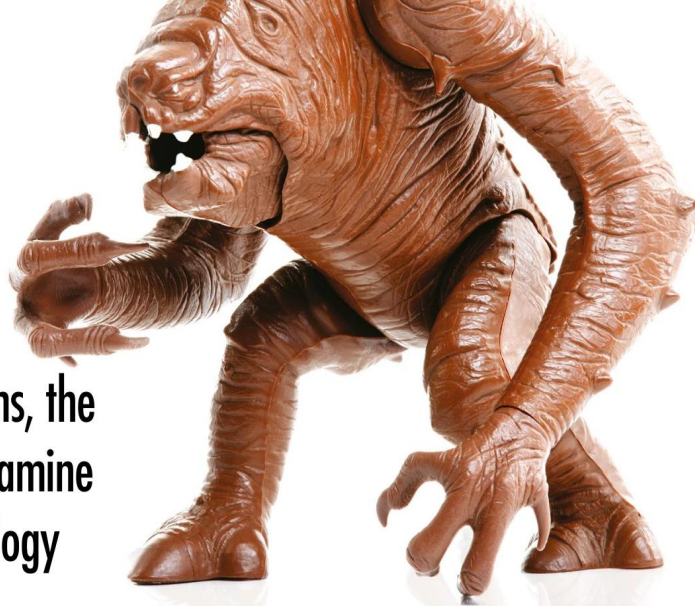
Best advice I ever heard was 'treat collecting as a marathon, not a sprint'. It doesn't even have to be expensive. I'd suggest starting with a loose figure collection. Once you've scored your toys, clean them with hot water and a soft brush, and you'll always end up with at least a few nice-condition complete ones. The rest you resell to pay for the ones you've kept.

Search for @maythetoysebewithyou on Facebook for all the latest updates on the exhibition.



MEDIA

Although there were only three core films, the hunger for Star Wars was strong. We examine how it expanded beyond the original trilogy



While the Star Wars toy line was incredibly successful for George Lucas, it wasn't a great way to expand the mythology of his beloved universe. Instead, the fertile franchise has grown through a variety of different mediums.

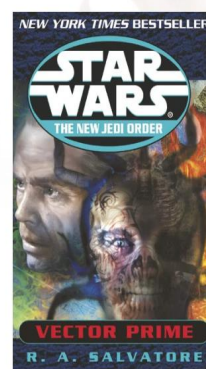
Comics and novels were the earliest such spin-offs. While the serialised story *The Keeper's World* ran in Marvel's Pizzazz comic in October 1977, the 1978 novel *Splinter Of The Mind's Eye* is generally considered to be the starting point for the 'Expanded Universe'. Featuring Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia, it had originally been intended as a low-budget sequel to *Star Wars* in case the original movie flopped. As Harrison Ford hadn't been signed on for any sequels at the time of writing, Han Solo didn't appear in it.

In 1987 West End Games released *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game*, which

offered further details about the many planets, races and vehicles found within the universe. It has continually evolved, even after West End Games lost the licence in 1998.

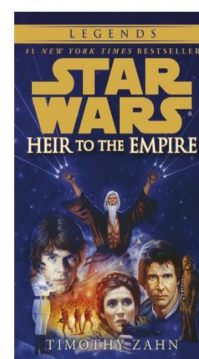
A series of comics by Dark Horse began in 1991 with *Dark Empire*, set six years after the end of *Return Of The Jedi*. Dark Horse continued to expand the universe until 2014, when comics moved to Disney-owned Marvel.

For many, the highlight of the Expanded Universe was the release of Timothy Zahn's *The Thrawn Trilogy*, which began in 1991 with *Heir To The Empire*. George Lucas had declared that many topics in the Star Wars universe, including the personal life of Anakin Skywalker and the rise of the Galactic Empire, were off-limits, so much of the Expanded Universe took place after *Return Of The Jedi*. It was Zahn's *Thrawn Trilogy* which was largely responsible for

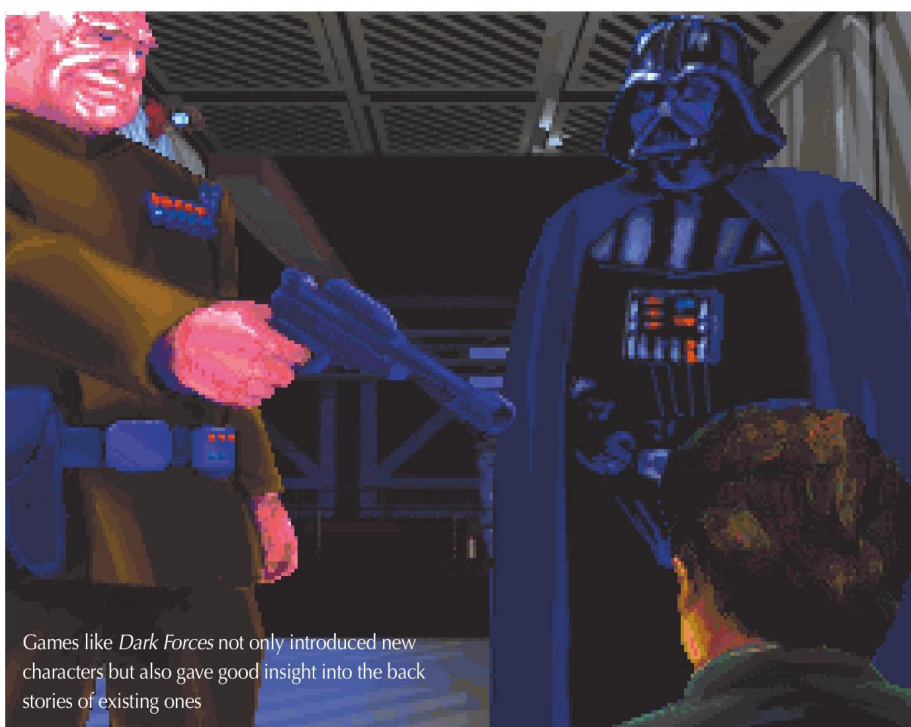


Novels like *Vector Prime* greatly expanded Star Wars' lore but weren't always popular with fans

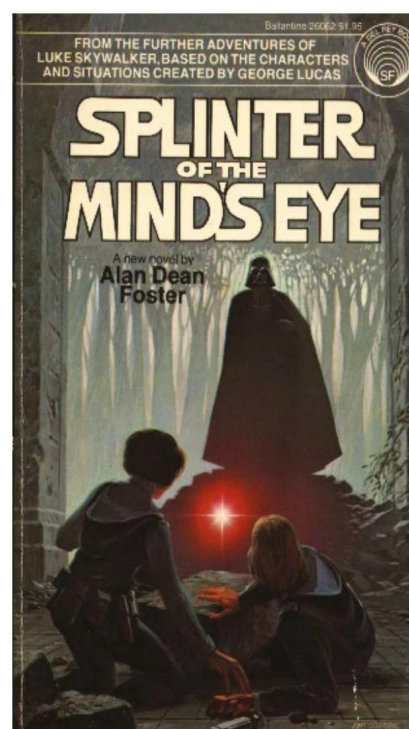
Many consider Timothy Zahn's *Thrawn* trilogy to be instrumental in helping to generate interest in Star Wars again



Splinter Of The Mind's Eye was originally going to be a low-budget sequel to *Star Wars*



Games like *Dark Forces* not only introduced new characters but also gave good insight into the back stories of existing ones

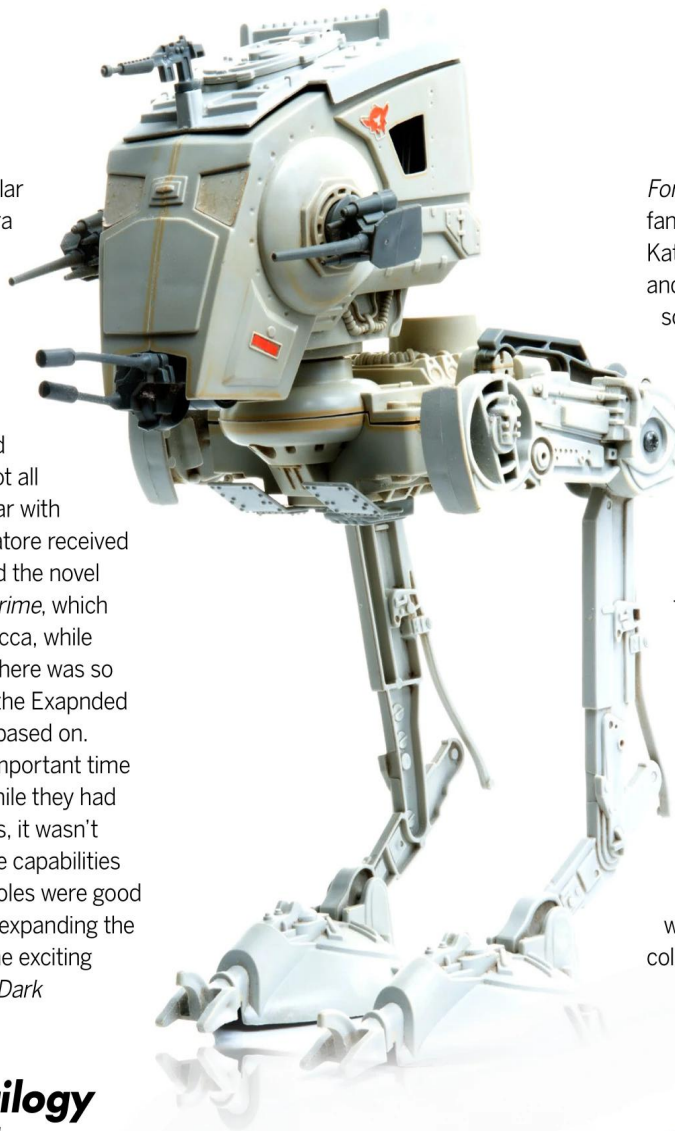


introducing a number of popular new characters, including Mara Jade, Grand Admiral Thrawn and the fleshing out of the Imperial capital Coruscant, which would later feature prominently in the second Star Wars trilogy. Novels continued to shape and mould the Star Wars universe, but not all the choices made were popular with fans. Famed author R.A. Salvatore received death threats when he penned the novel *The New Jedi Order: Vector Prime*, which featured the death of Chewbacca, while others began to despair that there was so much contradiction between the Expanded Universe and the films it was based on.

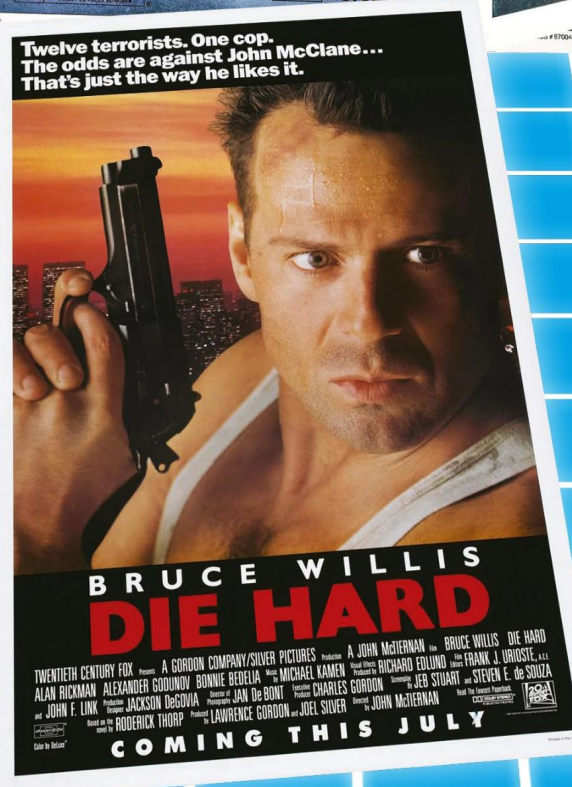
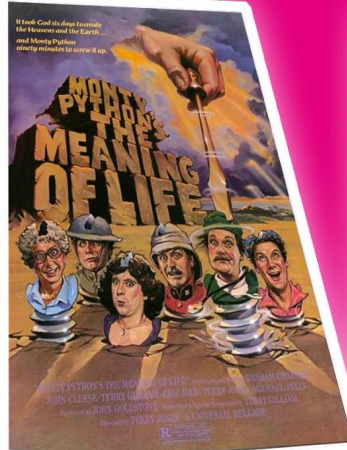
The Nineties was also an important time for Star Wars videogames. While they had existed since the early Eighties, it wasn't until the early Nineties that the capabilities of home computers and consoles were good enough for Lucasfilm to start expanding the Star Wars universe through the exciting new medium. Games like the *Dark*

Forces/Jedi Knight series would introduce fans to important new characters like Kyle Katarn, while the likes of *Rogue Squadron* and the *X-Wing* series allowed you to relive some of the franchise's most exciting missions, as well as experience brand new ones. Games like *Shadow Of The Empire* typically featured brand new characters, as developers felt that it gave them more freedom while creating their games. They would also mine lesser characters from the films, fleshing them out in a way that the movies simply couldn't afford to do. On 25 April 2014 Lucasfilm announced that the Expanded Universe would be retconned to take the new planned trilogy into account. As a result, all earlier non-film mentions of George Lucas's world would be placed under the Star Wars Legends banner and wouldn't be considered canon. While the news disgruntled some, Lucasfilm won't leave those characters out in the cold forever.

"The Thrawn Trilogy was responsible for introducing a number of popular new characters"



Cute.
Clever.
Mischievous.
Intelligent.
Dangerous.

A pair of hands is shown opening a white, rectangular box. Inside the box, two small, fluffy, blue and white creatures are visible. The creatures have a soft, woolly texture and are looking out from the box. The background is dark, and the lighting is focused on the box and the creatures inside.

80

FILMS THAT
DEFINED
THE '80s

An era of unforgettable adventures and legendary heroes, from street-smart cops to shirtless barbarians...

The Eighties were a golden era for the silver screen, one which was full of seminal moments such as Arnie's one-liners, Indiana Jones's bombastic theme tune announcing our hero's arrival, and Mr Miyagi teaching Daniel-san karate.

The decade had everything from time travel (*The Terminator*, *Bill & Ted*), to lampooning corporate culture (*Wall Street*, *Brazil*), to screwball comedies (*Caddyshack*, *National Lampoon's Vacation*). It gave us stars who seemed more at home in this era than any other, such as Kurt Russell, Eddie Murphy and Corey Feldman. The Eighties also launched the careers of megastars like Tom Cruise and Bruce Willis.

It was the last hoorah for physical special effects, giving kitsch sci-fi films like *NeverEnding Story* and *Labyrinth* a charm that hasn't quite been matched since. And the decade was also the last stand for action films that revelled in excess, the spirit of *Predator* and *Commando* only recently being revived in *The Expendables*.

But really, what defines movies in the Eighties is heart. Whether it was the high-school clichés learning to put their differences aside in *The Breakfast Club*, or Marty McFly's touching relationship with Doc in *Back To The Future*, there was a warmth radiating through films of the era that still resonates with audiences today. Okay, perhaps not in *The Terminator's* case...



The Breakfast Club

1985

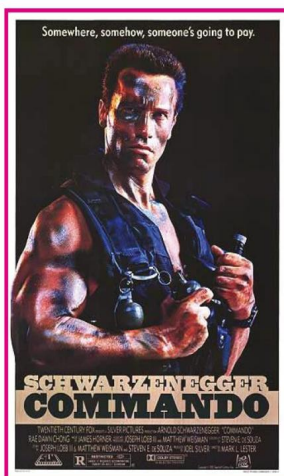
1 The ultimate teen movie was a deep-dive into the psyche of a group of high-school characters we knew — ‘a brain, athlete, basket case, princess and criminal’ all sharing detention together. *The Breakfast Club* also has the greatest freeze-frame ending of all time, John Bender punching the air as the opening chords of ‘Don’t You Forget About Me’ ring out. Iconic.



Commando

1985

2 It might not be considered Arnie’s greatest film, but *Commando* is definitely his most fun. The combination of comic-book violence and terrible one-liners sets the stage for Bennett, a chainmail-wearing baddie who looks more Freddie Mercury than terrifying villain. When he let off some steam in the movie’s dramatic final showdown, *Commando*’s place in Eighties history was secured.



▲ The Karate Kid

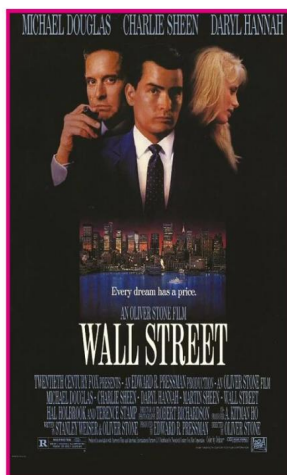
1984

3 Who needed karate lessons when you could practise wax on, wax off and painting the fence? Mr Miyagi’s karate lessons for ‘Daniel-san’ were unusual but necessary, as the California student found himself being bullied by the Cobra Kai dojo. Daniel’s crane-kick became one of the iconic images of the Eighties, along with the triumphant ‘You’re The Best’ anthem on the soundtrack.

Wall Street

1987

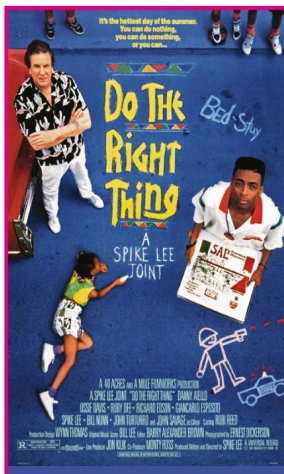
4 “Greed is good.” Gordon Gekko, the crooked corporate raider of *Wall Street*, became an accidental hero to bankers worldwide with his infamous speech about greed. Director Oliver Stone says that stockbrokers told him that the speech inspired them onto their career path, despite Gekko ultimately ending up in jail for his financial crimes.



Do The Right Thing

1989

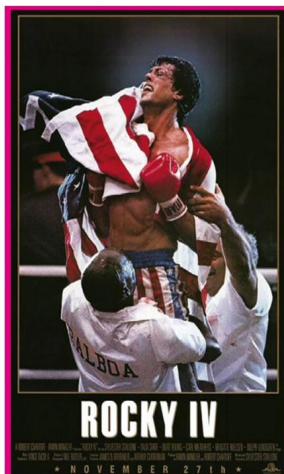
5 Set on the hottest day of the year in a Brooklyn summer, simmering racial animosity builds in *Do The Right Thing* until the tensions explode into a violent riot. Spike Lee’s modern classic held a mirror up to what was happening across the US, and was one of the first major movies to offer a serious look at inner-city race relations.



Rocky IV

1985

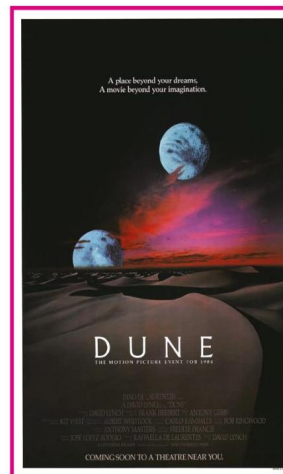
6 Although it didn’t manage to match the moving drama of the original, *Rocky IV* is dripping with Eighties cliché. Rocky’s bout vs Ivan Drago echoed real-world US vs Soviet Union Cold War tensions, and the movie doubled down on its aesthetic with power rock, training montages and awkward guesses at future technology courtesy of Rocky’s robot butlers.



Dune

1984

7 The combination of eye-watering budget, epic ambition, ludicrous plot, soundtrack by Toto and complete lack of self-awareness meant that *Dune* was a film that could only have been made in the Eighties. It was released to a mauling by critics, but it’s such an utterly bizarre film that the years since have seen it come full circle to be reborn as a cult classic.





Blade Runner

1982

8 Ridley Scott's neo-noir sci-fi movie is a slow-burner. It limped to poor box-office sales and initial reviews were mixed. But those who saw it loved the smart plot, dark world and ambiguous ending. Word of mouth saw *Blade Runner* re-evaluated and it eventually became one of the most influential sci-fi movies ever made.

Footloose

1984

11 The Eighties didn't lack for movies about dancing, thanks to *Fame*, *Flashdance* and *Dirty Dancing*. But while those films were kept somewhat grounded by a heavy dose of drama, *Footloose* 'kicked off its Sunday shoes' and had fun. It was more music video than serious movie, thanks to its high energy and light tone.



Who Framed Roger Rabbit

1988

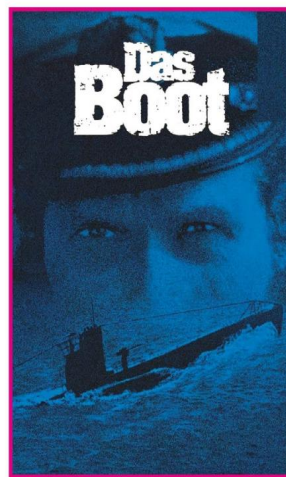
9 The mesmerising mixture of live action and animation had been done before but never like this. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* brought together serious actors (Bob Hoskins, Christopher Lloyd), adult humour, a murder mystery and the wildest bunch of cartoon characters you'll ever meet. There's been nothing quite like it since.



Das Boot

1981

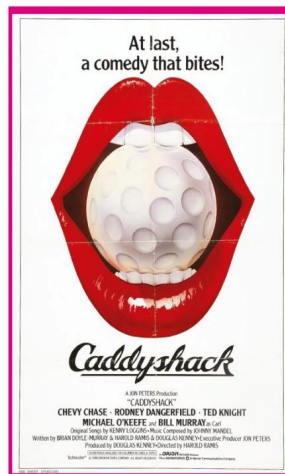
10 Every era has had a foreign-language film that has a huge cultural impact – *Seven Samurai*, *La Haine* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* are just a few standout examples. In the Eighties, it was the crushing darkness of German war film *Das Boot*, which offered a claustrophobic look at what a submarine crew had to endure during World War II.



Caddyshack

1980

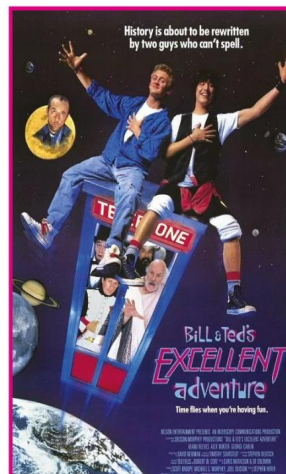
12 A slapstick movie that rockets past at breakneck speed, *Caddyshack* brought together some of the premier names in Eighties comedy – Harold Ramis, Chevy Chase, Rodney Dangerfield and Bill Murray. Held together by the loosest of plot threads, *Caddyshack* feels like a couple of hours of the funniest men in the world enjoying themselves, while we get the privilege to watch.



Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure

1989

13 This time-travel comedy was also a loving homage to the Californian slacker stereotype of the late Eighties. With ripped denim, wild hair, graffiti-splattered garages and gnarly vocab, Bill and Ted might have been dim-witted dudes, but their big hearts proved that it's what's under the surface that counts.



Stand By Me

1986

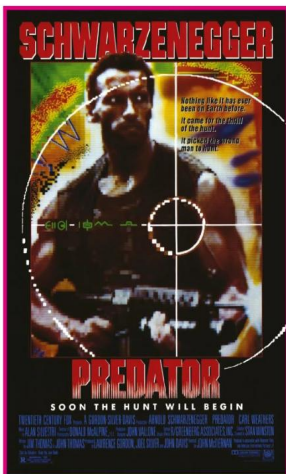
14 This memorable coming-of-age movie about four friends who set off to find the body of a missing boy resonated with young audiences because we felt like those friends. Angry, geeky, funny, or cool, we could all relate to someone in *Stand By Me*'s quartet. And along we just so happened to learn the meaning of friendship along the way, as they all set off on an impossible adventure.



Predator

1987

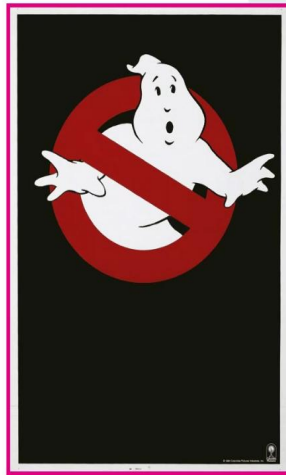
17 A murderous alien from another world arrives in a hot South American jungle, prompting the CIA to send in their biggest beefcakes to deal with the problem once and for all. Everything in *Predator* screamed excess, from Arnie's bulging biceps to the handheld miniguns to the movie-ending nuke that levels the jungle. Despite a ton of sequels, the original has yet to be topped.



Ghostbusters

1984

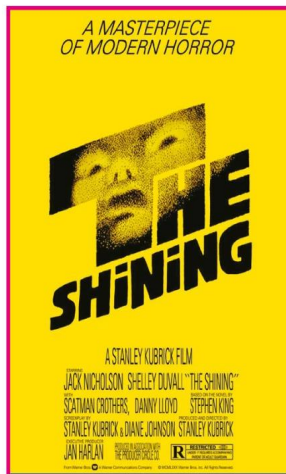
15 If there's something strange in your neighbourhood, who you gonna call? Dan Aykroyd, Bill Murray and the rest of the *Ghostbusters*, obviously. Unlike most comedies, *Ghostbusters* worked just as well as an action and sci-fi movie, delivering state-of-the-art special effects as the ghostbusting crew save New York from a host of spectacular supernatural threats.



The Shining

1980

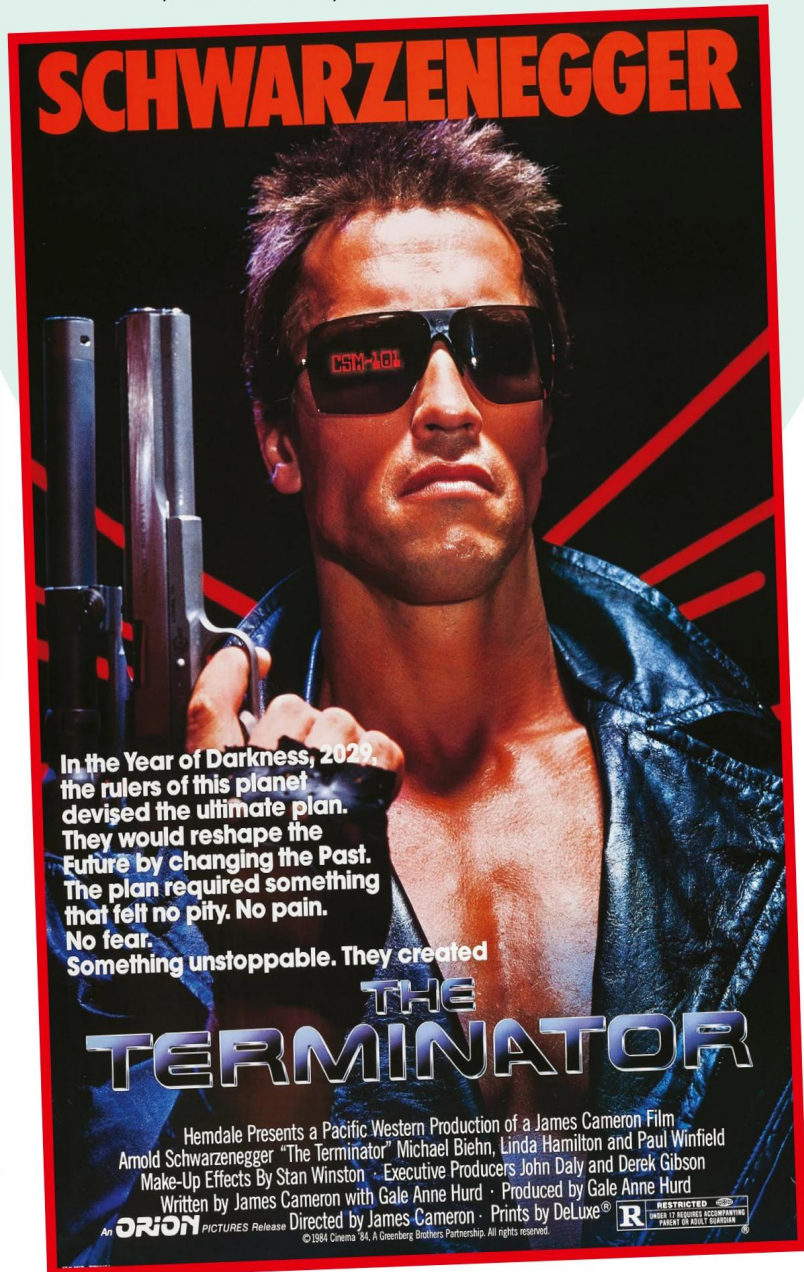
18 "Heeere's Johnny!" Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of Stephen King's psychological horror story focused on the mental breakdown of writer Jack Torrance. His psychological decline in the confines of a strange, remote hotel sees him eventually smashing through a door with an axe, delivering one of the most famous lines in cinema.



The Terminator

1984

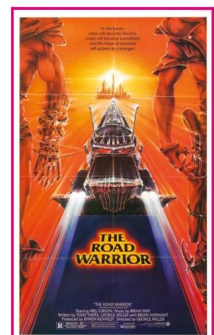
16 Although the series is known for its sci-fi action today, *The Terminator* was more sci-fi horror, following Sarah Connor's attempts to evade an unstoppable killing machine. Surprisingly, it was also a roller coaster ride through Eighties iconography – punk criminals, neon nightclubs, giant phones and Polaroid pictures.



Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior

1981

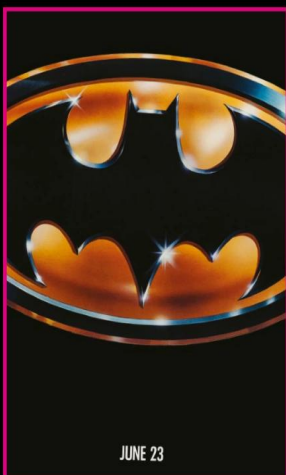
19 Upping the ante from the original outing, *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* was striking for both its action and its look. The combination of post-apocalyptic wasteland and Eighties punk style saw a host of B-movies soon follow in its wake, from *Warrior of the Lost World* to *Wheels on Fire*.



Batman

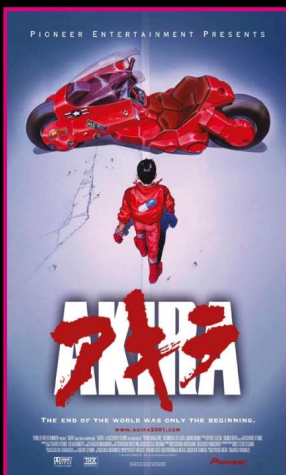
1989

20 *Batman* wasn't the first superhero movie, but there's no doubt it was one of the most influential. Unlike the late Adam West's brightly coloured Batman outing in 1966, Tim Burton's take on the caped crusader was dark and mysterious, setting the brooding template for superhero movies that's still being followed to this day by the likes of Zack Snyder.

**Akira**

1989

21 One of the most important films of the Eighties, *Akira* was the first anime to gain global recognition. The plot was nearly incomprehensible, but there was no denying the quality of the animation or the eye-catching images throughout, paving the way for *Ghost in the Shell* and *Ninja Scroll* to follow in its footsteps.

**Brazil**

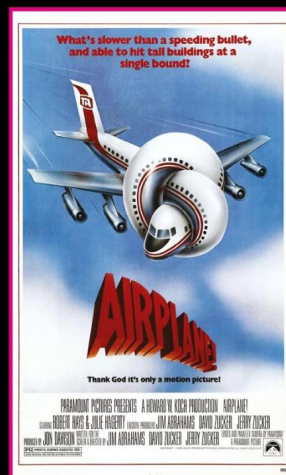
1985

22 Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* was bleak, surreal, funny and cruel. The plight of its hero Sam Lowry cut through the middle-management paperwork culture that was beginning to seep into everyday life, while combining it with one of the most restlessly creative worlds ever made. It also managed to turn the loveable Michael Palin into a politely smiling monster.

**Airplane**

1980

23 "Have you ever seen a grown man naked?" *Airplane* was the comedy that was proud to be a comedy, knowing full well that there was no joke too juvenile or too silly to make the cut. Its infectious enthusiasm and quick-fire gags became a hallmark of comedy at the time, and which would later be seen in films like *Spaceballs*.



RAIDERS

of the LOST ARK

Raiders of the Lost Ark

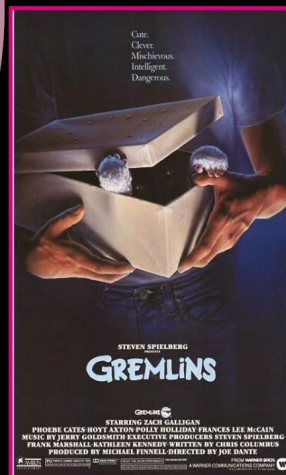
1981

24 The biggest adventurer of the Eighties was Indiana Jones. Harrison Ford was perfect as the wise-cracking, whip-cracking, skull-cracking hero, adding just enough vulnerability to Indy that we all wanted to cheer for him. This first adventure, which pitted Indiana Jones against the Nazis, remains one of the greatest films of all time.

Gremlins

1984

25 Don't expose them to bright light. Don't get them wet. And whatever you do, don't feed them after midnight. These three rules became legendary in the wake of *Gremlins*' success, as director Joe Dante and executive producer Steven Spielberg turned a family-friendly movie on its head by introducing the deadly and ravenous little monsters halfway through the film.



"A fitting finale for a man who injected the most humour into the James Bond franchise"



A View To A Kill ▲

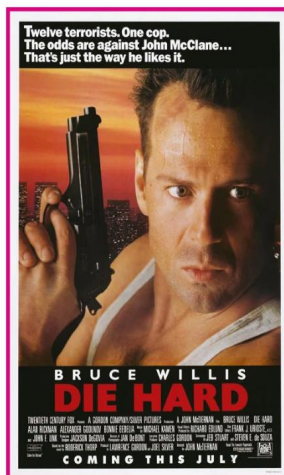
1985

26 The late Roger Moore's final Bond outing was his most ridiculous, and starts with him investigating racehorses and ends with him battling Christopher Walken's Zorin on an airship floating over the Golden Gate Bridge. It was a fitting finale for a man who injected the most humour into the James Bond franchise.

Die Hard

1988

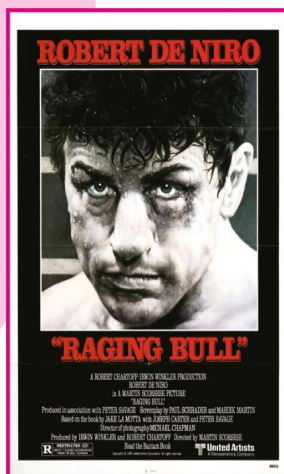
27 *Die Hard* might be notorious nowadays for being the centre of annual is-it-a-Christmas-movie borefest arguments but regardless of your stance, it's still one of the greatest action films of all time. It did this by making Bruce Willis relatable as John McClane, a normal cop who just so happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.



Raging Bull

1980

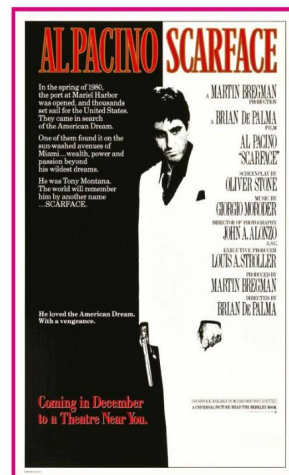
29 As Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier's illustrious careers were drawing to a close, Martin Scorsese teamed up with frequent collaborator Robert De Niro for *Raging Bull*, the story of former World Middleweight champion Jake LaMotta's life. The explosive drama and powerful acting made for one of the greatest films ever made, and cemented De Niro as one of the premier leading men of his generation.



Scarface

1983

28 No film captures the vibe of Eighties Miami like *Scarface* does – the crime, the glamour, the immigrants, the drugs. At the heart of it all is the scowling menace of Al Pacino as Cuban thug-turned cocaine kingpin Tony Montana. His rapid rise is only matched by his dramatic fall, with "say hello to my little friend!" now permanently etched in pop culture.



Fast Times at Ridgemont High

1982

30 Without wanting to put too fine a point on it, teenage boys are the audience that are most likely to remember *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. In a film stuffed with lewd humour and memorable scenes, it was actress Phoebe Cates who stole the show, when she emerged from a swimming pool and stunned viewers by dropping her bikini.



The Thing

1982

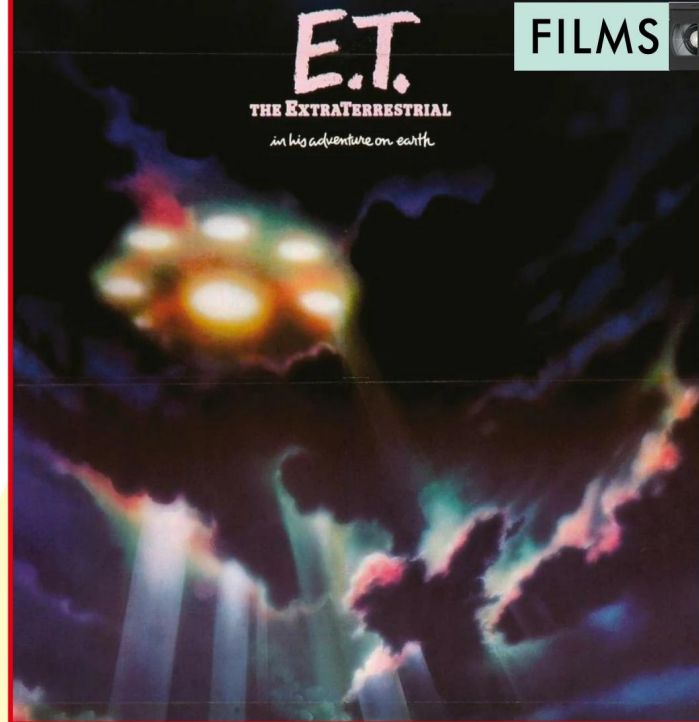
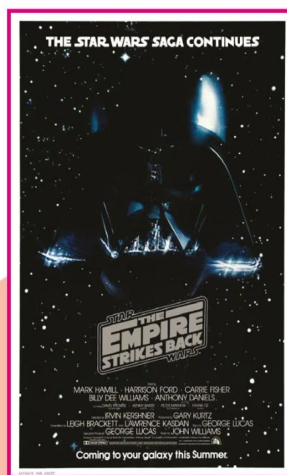
31 From the freezing outpost to the cold synths of the soundtrack, the icy horror of *The Thing* felt unrelentingly desolate and bleak. Not only was John Carpenter's *The Thing* a smart psychological horror, but among the snowstorms was a blizzard of practical special effects that made even seasoned horror fans watch the unfolding horror through their fingers.



Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back

1980

32 After the culture-defining space opera of *Star Wars*, the pressure was on for the sequel to deliver. It did. With lines like "Never tell me the odds", the introduction of Yoda, and Darth Vader revealing a shocking secret, *The Empire Strikes Back* was every bit as memorable.



E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial

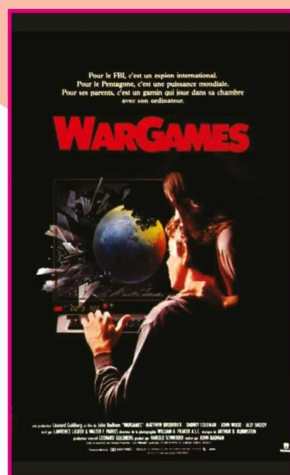
1982

33 Steven Spielberg had already proven his directing skills with *Jaws* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. But he saved his best for *E.T.*, a mix of sci-fi and fantasy that almost invented the summer family blockbuster. *E.T.* became the highest-grossing film of all time, a record held until 1993's *Jurassic Park* – another Spielberg classic

WarGames

1983

34 Developed in response to the Cold War threat of nuclear war, *WarGames* has been referenced again and again over the years whenever global conflict looms. In particular, its famous "the only winning move is not to play" seems as relevant today as it did back then. Not bad for a film about a high school student hacking into a military supercomputer...



Friday The 13th

1980

35 The series that made Jason Voorhees and his hockey mask a horror movie legend started with... a woman. It was actually Jason's mother, Pamela, who was responsible for killing the cast one by one in the original *Friday The 13th*, before Jason went on to become a horror icon in the subsequent sequels.



Flashdance

1983

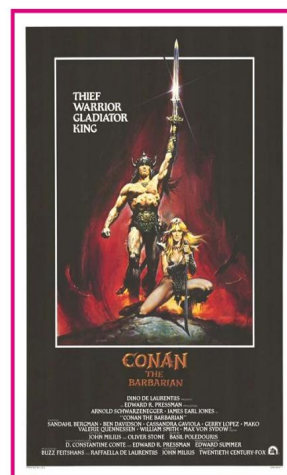
36 This story about a Pittsburgh welder called Alex trying to make it as a dancer was a surprise box-office hit. But that wasn't the biggest success story here. *Flashdance* the movie was eclipsed by its own title track, which hit the top of the music charts, earned an Academy Award, and made Alex dancing one of the enduring images of the Eighties to boot.

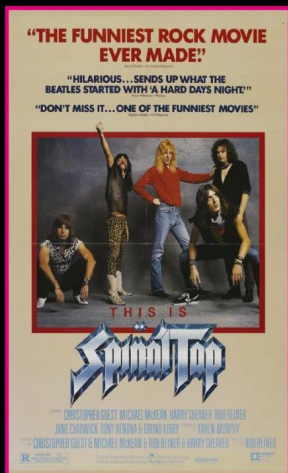


Conan The Barbarian

1982

37 It was the film that brought Arnold Schwarzenegger to the world, playing to his strengths (comic-book physique) and hiding his weaknesses (giving him almost no dialogue). The hulking Austrian actor made his mark, however, with *Conan* being the first sign of his movie dominance for the next decade.

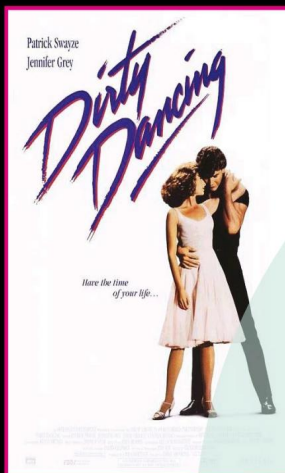




This Is Spinal Tap

1984

38 Whenever you refer to something being turned up to 11, you can thank *This Is Spinal Tap*. The hilarious rock mockumentary – a genre that the film helped to pioneer – parodied the bad hair and worse outfits of metal bands of the Eighties, with the likes of Metallica and Glenn Danzig paying tribute to the comedy after release for its accuracy.



Dirty Dancing

1987

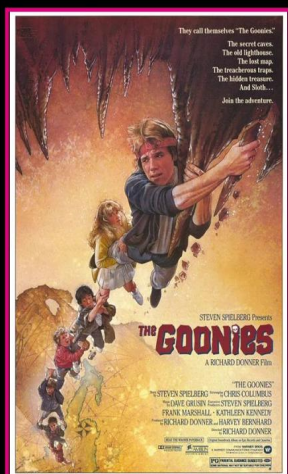
39 This romantic movie sizzled for all the right reasons, thanks to the amazing on-screen chemistry between Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey, along with their hot dancing. Once all the drama settled, *Dirty Dancing* also closed with one of the most unashamedly joyous endings of the Eighties, with everyone dancing to '(I've Had) The Time Of My Life'. And we owe it all to them!



Beetlejuice

1988

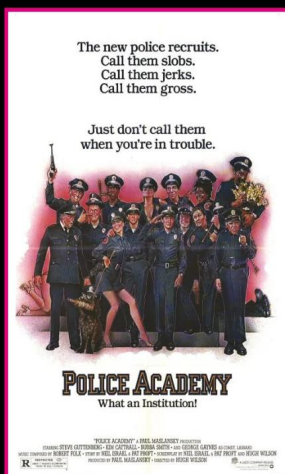
40 One of the most memorable characters of the Eighties is Beetlejuice, a wild-haired ghost in a monochrome striped suit. Mischievous, deviant but never downbeat, Beetlejuice crackled with a nervous, skittish energy that meant you could never take your eyes off him.



The Goonies

1985

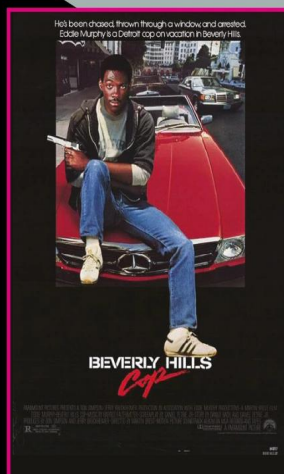
41 Nothing captured the spirit of adventure when you were a kid quite like *The Goonies* did. The tale of kids setting off to find hidden treasure mirrored your own adventures, whether you were rooting around the back garden of your home or exploring every corner of the local park. Fortunately, none of us would have had Sloth chasing us while doing so...



Police Academy

1984

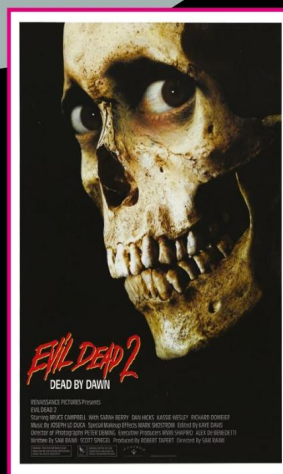
42 Who was your favourite police academy recruit? Beatboxing Larvell Jones, imitating everything from gunfire to couples arguing? The psychotic Tackleberry? The hyperactive Zed, as lovable as he was weird? No matter who you preferred, if you were around in the Eighties, you were obligated to pick a favourite from the *Police Academy* series...



Beverly Hills Cop

1984

43 Fast-paced comedy *Beverly Hills Cop* was an embodiment of everything American in the Eighties. The glamour of Beverly Hills. The black cop from Detroit. The street-smart versus the rich conflict at its centre. The cocaine-focused plot. And, of course, it was powered by the keyboard synths of catchy instrumental theme 'Axel F'.



Evil Dead 2

1987

44 Horror and slapstick comedy were booming genres in the Eighties, but *Evil Dead 2: Dead By Dawn* was the first movie to combine the two. The combination of Sam Raimi's hyperactive direction and Bruce Campbell's endless charisma made for a film that effortlessly alternated between buckets of laughs and buckets of gore.

PART MAN,
PART MACHINE,
ALL COP.

ROBOCOP

THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

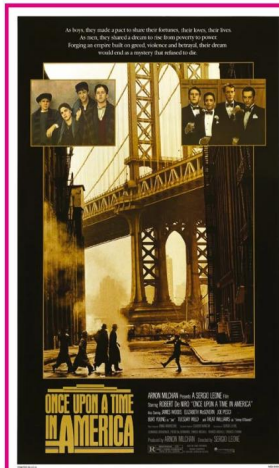
A Jon Davison PRODUCTION • A Paul Verhoeven FILM • Peter Weller • Nancy Allen • Robocop • Daniel O'Herlihy
Ronny Cox • Kurtwood Smith • Miguel Ferrer • MUSIC BY Basil Poledouris • DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Jost Vacano
FILM EDITOR Frank J. Urioste • ROBOCOP DESIGNED BY Rob Bottin • EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Jon Davison
WRITTEN BY Edward Neumeier & Michael Miner • PRODUCED BY Arne Schmidt • DIRECTED BY Paul Verhoeven

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Robocop

1987

45 With crime making inner-city Detroit a no-go area, there was almost a whiff of plausibility about RoboCop, the robotic law enforcer created to clean it up. As a movie, *RoboCop* was as smart as it was bloody, finding room to lampoon corporate culture among its endless shoot-outs.



Once Upon A Time In America

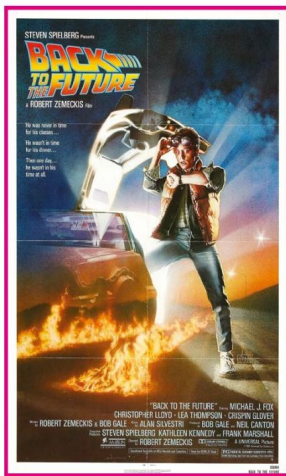
1984

46 This 229-minute epic was the last film for legendary director Sergio Leone, chronicling the rise of mobsters and organised crime in New York. Nothing felt quite as epic as *Once Upon A Time In America*, which kept the drama taut from its opening shot until the final credits.

Back To The Future

1985

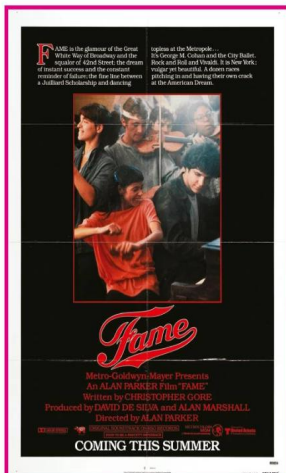
47 This adventure is rich in imagination and full of heart, thanks to its two likeable leads in Michael J. Fox as fun-loving Marty McFly and Christopher Lloyd as eccentric inventor Doc. There's also real intrigue with the time-travelling plot, and all these elements combined for one of the most iconic and entertaining films of the Eighties.



Fame

1980

50 With its headbands, legwarmers, big hair and street dancing, musical drama *Fame* captured the spirit and style of the Eighties perfectly. Its title track also became one of the biggest hits of the era and its 'I'm going to live forever' line perfectly sums up the energy, optimism and vibrancy of the film itself. Energy that remakes and adaptations have since tried, and failed, to recapture.



Top Gun

1986

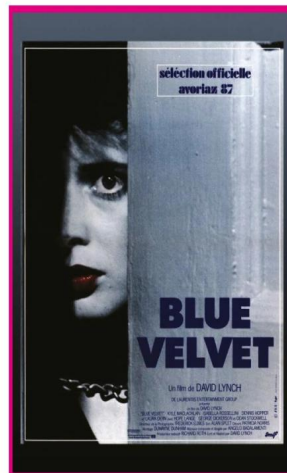
48 Squealing guitars, fighter jets, shirtless volleyball and characters called Goose and Maverick. Could this film have been made in any other era? *Top Gun* is as much a love letter to the military as it is to the bromances at the centre of the movie, while the soundtrack also made a major splash, with 'Take My Breath Away' and 'Danger Zone' becoming huge hits.



Blue Velvet

1986

51 Considered one of the greatest movies of the Eighties – and perhaps one of the greatest films of all time – David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* is a curious blend of psychological horror and sexual thriller. A fascinating film that dances between ridiculous surrealism and serious drama, it demands several more viewings to peel through its many layers.



Honey, I Shrunk The Kids

1989

49 When madcap inventor Wayne Szalinski accidentally shrunk his kids, it not only set the stage for a brilliantly inventive comedy, but it also gave us an intimate look at the American household and the items that fill it. You'll see all sorts of Eighties curios on display here, albeit at giant size!



Planes, Trains and Automobiles

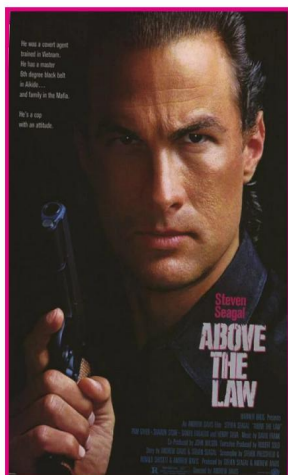
1987

52 Steve Martin and John Candy get the perfect chance to show off their acting chops alongside their comedy skills, in a film that ranges from family comedy to road movie. Although it wasn't a huge success, the movie's stellar acting and warm heart made it one of the best of its time.

Above The Law

1988

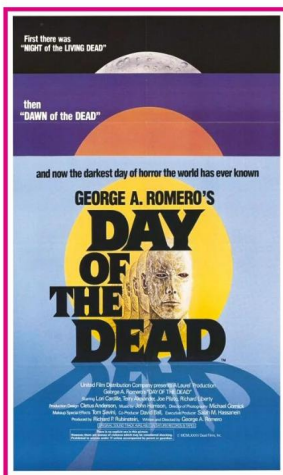
53 A new action star made his movie debut just as the Eighties were drawing to a close – Steven Seagal. Although he's primarily known nowadays for his strange outfits and ill-fated forays into law enforcement for TV, his real-life aikido skills made him a credible action hero at the time, and saw *Above The Law* become a box-office success.



Day Of The Dead

1985

54 With the golden age of zombie movies drawing to a close, George Romero still had one last huge hit in him – until 2005's *Land of the Dead*, that is. Taking place in a small military bunker, *Day of the Dead* shows that desperate survivors are as much of a threat to each other as a mindless horde of bloodthirsty zombies.



Fatal Attraction

1987

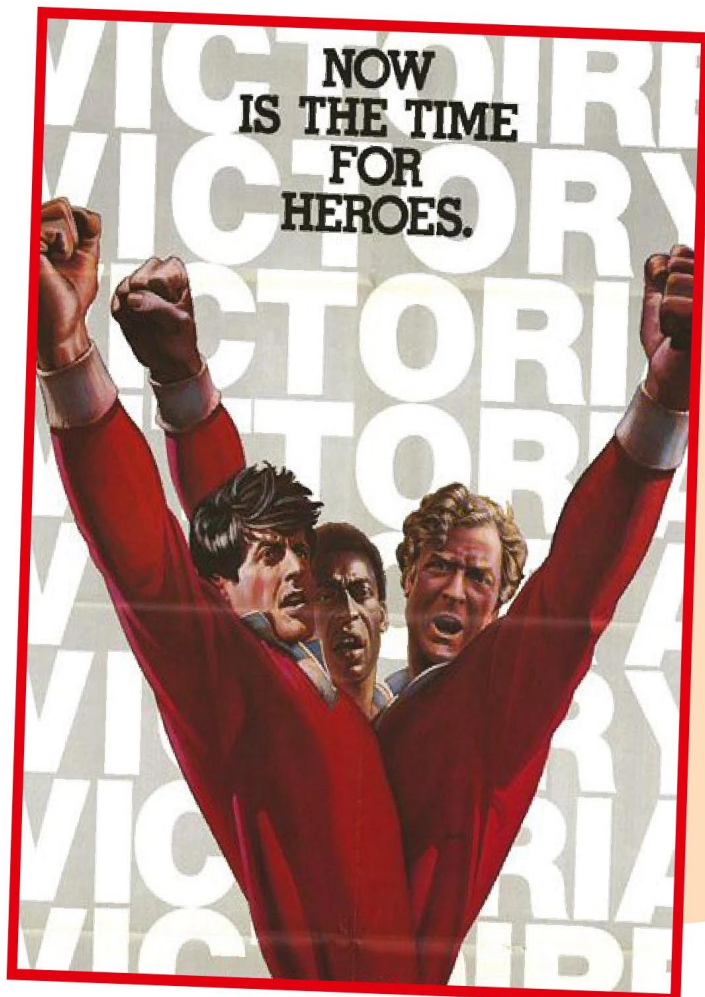
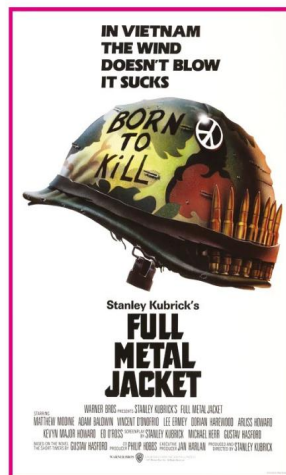
55 Want to know where the phrase 'bunny boiler' comes from? Glenn Close plays jilted love Alex Forrest in *Fatal Attraction*, and her pet-stewing antics helped make the film a massive hit. Forrest becomes more and more desperate to recapture her former lover's attention, which leads to her boiling his daughter's pet bunny on the stove.



Full Metal Jacket

1987

56 *Full Metal Jacket* wasn't a huge hit with critics or cinema-goers on its initial release, but Stanley Kubrick's Vietnam film arguably had the greatest opening scene of any war movie. Gunnery Sergeant Hartman screaming at his troops became the standout moment, his raw intensity leaving its mark on everyone who watched it.



Escape To Victory

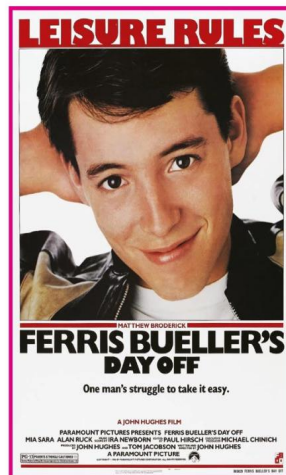
1981

57 It's harder to think of any film that has brought so many conflicting elements together. Michael Caine, Sylvester Stallone and Pele team up as prisoners of war, playing a football match as cover for a POW escape attempt. It's quirky and oddly charming, just because it's so different.

Ferris Bueller's Day Off

1986

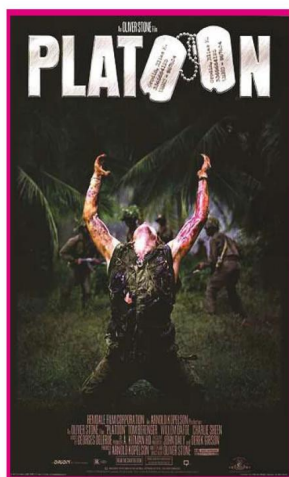
58 Who'd have thought that someone having a day off school could be so much fun? The young Matthew Broderick was perfectly cast as slacker student Ferris, who joins a parade float and poses as 'the Sausage King of Chicago', all while avoiding the curmudgeonly Dean Rooney. Fun, cool, and care-free, Broderick was the student we all wanted to be.



Platoon

1986

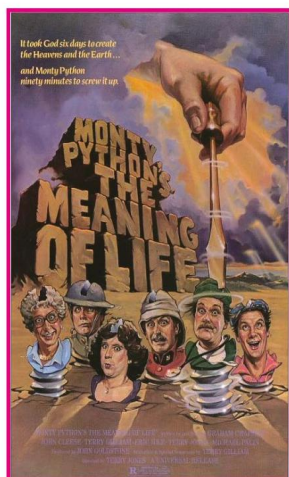
59 Sgt. Elias's death in *Platoon* was one of the unforgettable images of the Eighties, his arms-aloft pose being used for the posters and VHS releases. It was one of many harrowing and unforgettable scenes in Oliver Stone's brutal and uncompromising war film, which was powerful, moving and captured the fervent anti-war sentiment of the time.



Monty Python's The Meaning Of Life

1983

61 Monty Python's work was well known by 1983, as their surreal brand of humour across film and television made them world famous. But their final film, *The Meaning Of Life*, was a surprisingly dark turn for the comedy group, a series of sketches that were firmly rooted in black humour.



Aliens

1986

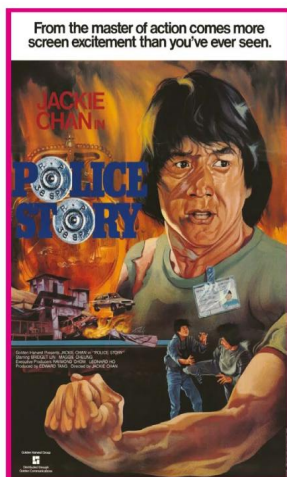
60 After the taut horror of the original *Alien*, James Cameron ramped up the action for the sequel. Rather than one Xenomorph terrorising audiences, there were now hundreds of them, fighting the marines who had landed to investigate Hadleys Hope. The ominous beeping of the motion tracker from *Aliens* has become movie legend.



Police Story

1985

62 Through low-quality VHS tapes, those in the know had begun to spread word about a Hong Kong action star called Jackie Chan, famed for his on-screen charisma, fighting skills and death-defying stunts. *Police Story* became the go-to movie for those fans wanting to show off this new action star they had discovered, with amazing stunts that put many Western films to shame.



Flash Gordon

1980

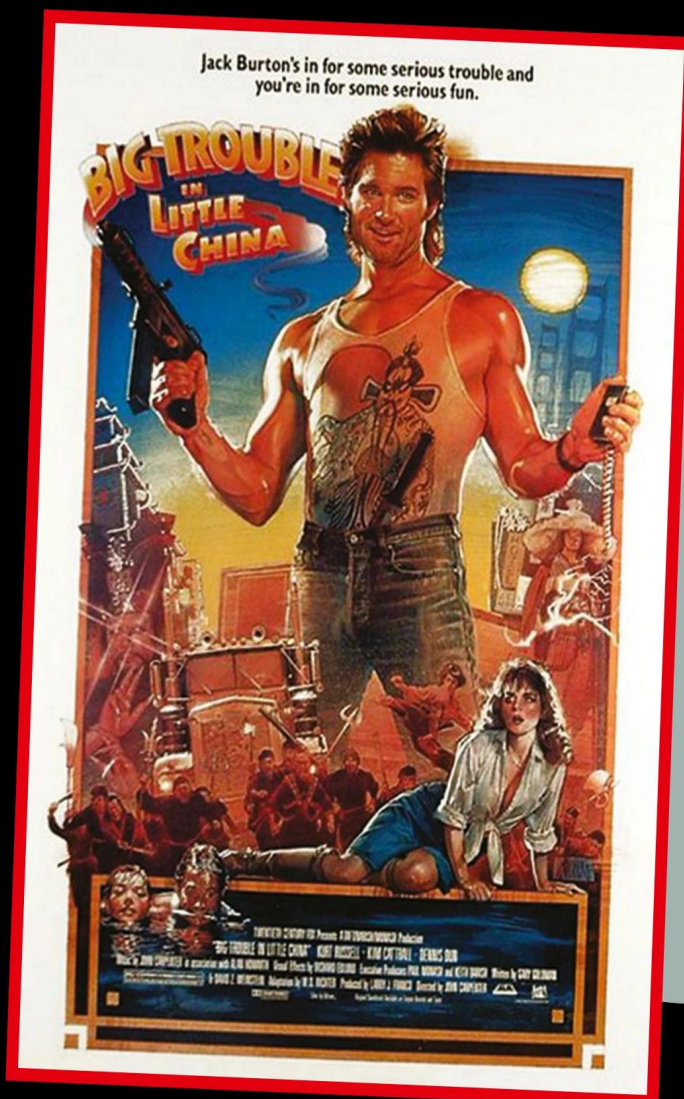
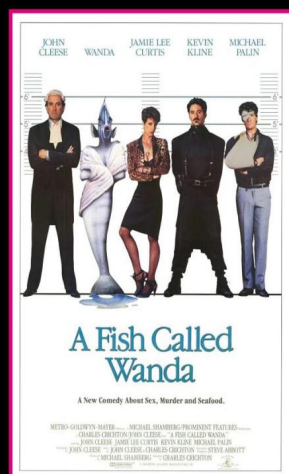
63 Nothing did campy, kitsch sci-fi in the Eighties as well as *Flash Gordon*. From the Spandex outfits to the Queen soundtrack to Brian Blessed's bellowing, this is a film that oozes fun from every pore and seems to almost enjoy how ridiculous it is.

"A film that oozes fun from every pore and seems to almost enjoy how ridiculous it is"

A Fish Called Wanda

1988

64 An unusual crossover of British and American talents, *A Fish Called Wanda* saw John Cleese, Michael Palin and Kevin Kline star as diamond thieves trying to double-cross one another. The comedy became a huge hit on both sides of the Atlantic, eventually leading to a sequel almost a decade later called *Fierce Creatures*.



Big Trouble In Little China

1986

65 A cult classic of the Eighties, *Big Trouble In Little China* brings the best of Western cowboy movies and martial arts flicks together. It's bursting with more ideas and creativity in a single scene than most films manage in their entire running time, all anchored by Kurt Russell's charisma and charm.

Star Trek II: The Wrath Of Khan

1982

66 *Star Trek* had already made its big screen debut in 1979, but the sequel heralded a new age in special effects, with the first completely computer-generated sequence created by ILM. The film also gave us William Shatner's legendary scream of "Khaaaaan!", so that's two iconic movie moments found here.



My Neighbor Totoro

1988

67 Although it wouldn't become a Western hit until many years later, *My Neighbor Totoro* proved that Hayao Miyazaki's animation wizardry took root in the Eighties. From Catbus to Totoro itself, this magical film was full of memorable characters and creatures that lingered in the mind long after the credits rolled.



The Killer

1989

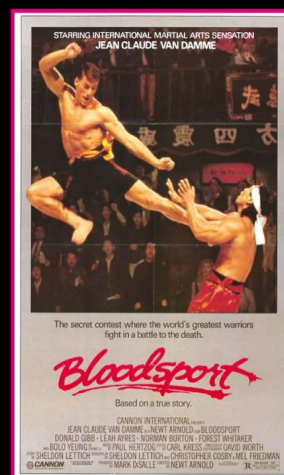
68 John Woo would become a household name with Western films like *Face/Off* and *Broken Arrow*, but his name first appeared on our radar with *The Killer*. In stark contrast to the blunt force fury of most action films, *The Killer* opted for cool style and panache instead, giving genre fans a choice of which type they wanted to watch.



Bloodsport

1988

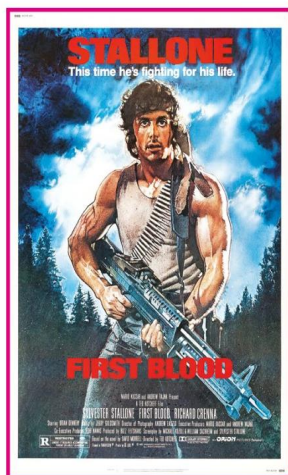
69 With underground martial arts becoming bigger in the Eighties, Western directors were eventually drawn to the blossoming genre. It was one of those early Western takes on the genre that gave rise to a brand new star – a Belgian martial artist called Jean-Claude Van Damme, who kicked and punched his way through *Bloodsport*.



First Blood

1982

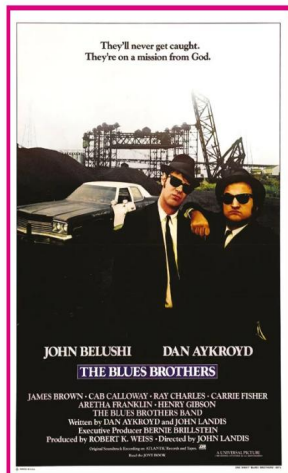
70 The *Rambo* series would later reposition itself as the home of OTT action blockbusters, but *First Blood* stands in stark contrast to its sequels. A deep and dark examination of the tortured psyche of a Vietnam veteran who has returned home, the plight of Sylvester Stallone's character mirrored what was happening in the real world with many former American soldiers who had served in Vietnam.



The Blues Brothers

1980

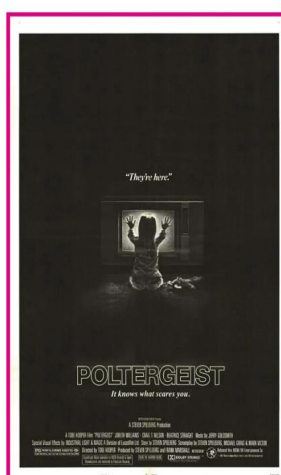
73 The Blues Brothers started life on USTV sketch show *Saturday Night Live*, but it was their big-screen debut that brought them to a global audience. The swagger and style marked *The Blues Brothers* out as a comedy with a difference, so it was little surprise that it overcame its humble TV roots to become a massive hit.



Poltergeist

1982

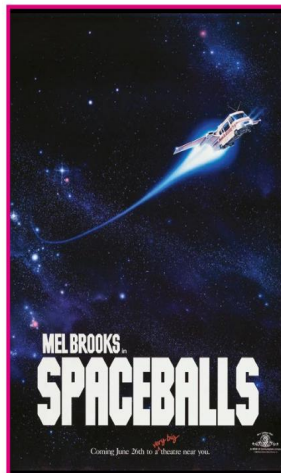
71 A stormy night. A room full of clown dolls. A scared boy holding a torch. A wind-up string returning to its doll as a menacing ditty plays... if you've seen *Poltergeist*, you know what happens next. The clown leaping out at the screen in a terrifying, toothy attack was one of, if not the, scariest scene of the Eighties, and helped secure Tobe Hooper's film as a horror classic.



Spaceballs

1987

74 *Spaceballs* is a perfect snapshot of Eighties movies. It was a parody of sci-fi juggernauts like *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*, but also found room to send up *Aliens*, *Police Academy*, *Rambo*, *Rocky* and *Back To The Future*, among others. It's also a hilarious film in its own right, its 100-jokes-per-minute pace ensuring there's always something to laugh at.



A Nightmare On Elm Street

1984

72 While Japanese horror *Ringu* spooked modern audiences by breaking the fourth wall – watch this movie and you'll be cursed to die – *A Nightmare On Elm Street* was the first to leave lingering fear when the credits stopped rolling. Freddy Krueger killed his victims in their dreams, making going to sleep a terrifying prospect for the easily scared...

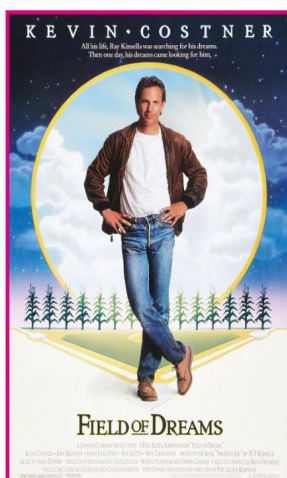


"Freddy Krueger killed his victims in their dreams, making going to sleep a terrifying prospect"

Field of Dreams

1989

75 "If you build it, he will come" – a famous line that has been misquoted (and parodied) endlessly ever since the release of *Field of Dreams*. This Kevin Costner film about a farmer's dream to build a baseball field is a sentimental flick about making the impossible come true, rather than a typical sports movie. It's heavy on the schmaltz, but we challenge you hold back the tears throughout.



Labyrinth

1986

76 Although *Labyrinth* wasn't David Bowie's first foray into the world of acting, it remains his most memorable. *Labyrinth*'s eccentric mix of fantasy, music, puppetry and adventure was the perfect place for the charismatic singer to shine, playing the wild-haired Goblin King.

The Little Mermaid

1989

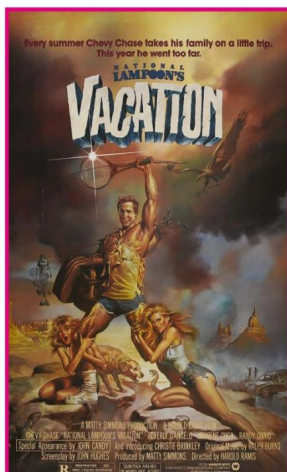
77 From the catchy 'Under the Sea' ditty to the skittish rantings of Sebastian the crab, *The Little Mermaid* is a film that's buzzing with fun and radiates joy. It was Disney's biggest hit in the Eighties by far and helped kick-start a new golden age for the company, as almost young girls everywhere fell in love with Ariel's adventures.



National Lampoon's Vacation

1983

78 Chevy Chase was arguably the biggest comedy star in the world in 1983, and *National Lampoon's Vacation* was a vehicle written especially for him. The jokes come thick and fast, all making the most of Chase's slapstick humour and brilliant comedy timing.



The NeverEnding Story

1984

79 The perfect whirlwind of high fantasy, dizzying ambition, and practical effects combined for an unforgettable story (which, despite its name, only lasted 93 minutes). Who can forget the sight of luckdragon Falkor soaring among the stars?



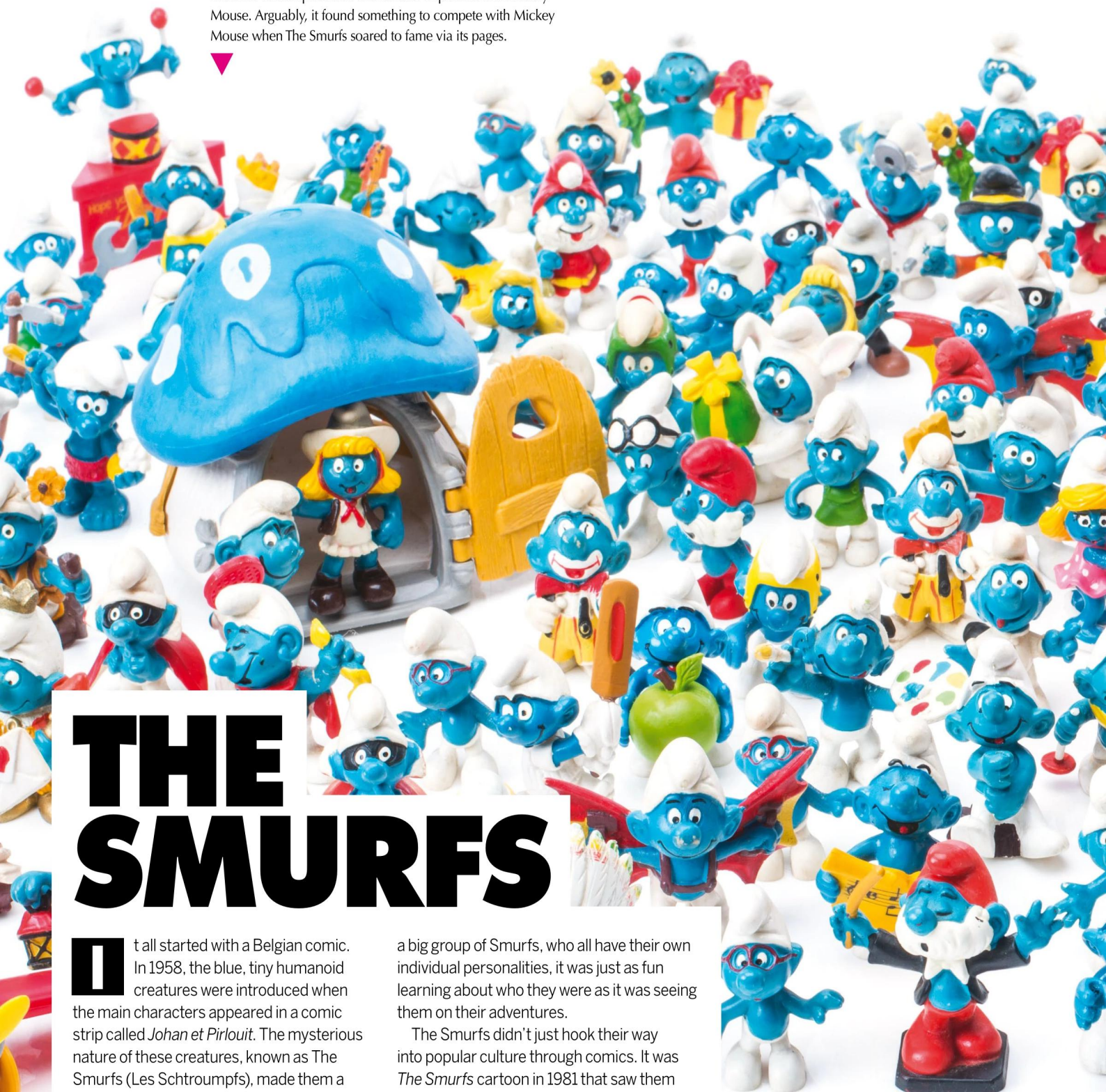
The Lost Boys

1987

80 The movie that made Kiefer Sutherland, Corey Haim and Corey Feldman superstars. It wasn't just the young friends vs vampires plot that did it either. Rather, it was the swagger and wild streak of style running through *The Lost Boys* that made them stand out, their bleached hair and oversized leather jackets demanding attention.



The Smurfs debuted in *Johan et Pirlouit*, which was part of *Le Journal de Spirou*, a Belgian comic first published in 1938. Its mission? To compete with the cultural imperialism of Mickey Mouse. Arguably, it found something to compete with Mickey Mouse when The Smurfs soared to fame via its pages.



THE SMURFS

It all started with a Belgian comic. In 1958, the blue, tiny humanoid creatures were introduced when the main characters appeared in a comic strip called *Johan et Pirlouit*. The mysterious nature of these creatures, known as The Smurfs (Les Schtroumpfs), made them a big hit and they soon graduated to their own comic. From there, The Smurfs have been an unstoppable success.

Despite their unusual look, the concept of The Smurfs is simple enough. Led by Papa Smurf, the only one to wear red instead of white, it's often an inward look at how they all get along and deal with adversity. With such

a big group of Smurfs, who all have their own individual personalities, it was just as fun learning about who they were as it was seeing them on their adventures.

The Smurfs didn't just hook their way into popular culture through comics. It was *The Smurfs* cartoon in 1981 that saw them explode on the world stage, while their previous success closer to home meant there was already a wide range of figurines already available for new fans to buy.

With 105 Smurfs, from Papa Smurf and Smurfette to the likes of Brainy and Greedy, there are plenty of poses, outfits and looks available for Smurfs fans to choose from.

Information

Manufacturer: Dupuis

First Released: 1959

Current Price: £3.99 (for basic Smurf)

Smurfs figures don't just depict them in their normal day-to-day life. There have been seasonal releases as well, such as the Wreath Smurf and Smurf Rides A Candy Cane to celebrate Christmas.



With so many Smurf figurines being released, and so many collectors, it's no surprise that some rare Smurfs have a high price attached to them. Praying Smurf and Smurfette are two of the rarer Smurf figurines and they cost \$200 each.

The Smurf characters were inspired by the trolls of Nordic folklore, if not in looks then in how they acted. Trolls are famously slow and dim-witted, and that bumbling charm is part of what made The Smurfs so much fun.

The Legacy

With videogames, movies and even theme parks to their name, The Smurfs are as popular now as ever. There have only been two years since 1969 that didn't see new Smurf figurines hit the market, with over 300 million sold to date. Most recently, The Smurfs' biggest hit has been a CGI movie in 2011 which made over half a billion dollars at the box office. *Smurfs: Lost Village*, a traditionally animated film starring Demi Lovato, is also due this year.



Information

Original Manufacturer: Those Characters From Cleveland

First Released: 1981

Current Manufacturer: Just Play

Current Price: £7.99 (for Care Bears Bedtime Bear)



CARE BEARS

▲
To mark the 20th anniversary of the Care Bears, the brand was relaunched in 2002. This revamp included all-new character designs, as well as a pair of straight-to-DVD movies.

Every child of the Eighties will remember the Care Bears. The brightly coloured bears stamped their mark on popular culture by being anywhere and everywhere. Whether it was through toys in the home or their cartoon on Saturday morning TV or their many animated films, it was impossible to avoid them. But what most people don't know is that Care Bears started their journey on the front of greeting cards.

It was 1981 when the first ten Care Bears were designed for greeting cards. Just two years later, the toy line for the Care Bears was rolled out, which is when children began to really fall in love with them. The Care Bears are all distinct by their different colour and, more importantly, the 'tummy symbols' on their stomach. These symbols show their

distinct personalities – Bedtime Bear had a sleeping moon on his stomach, Cheer Bear had a rainbow, Friend Bear had two flowers, and so on. Their personalities made them collectible and the best was yet to come.

The Care Bears took to TV and cinema screens, with *The Care Bears* cartoon and *The Care Bears Movie* in 1985. Both introduced us to the Care Bears' home, Care-a-Lot, along with new characters like Cozy Heart Penguin and Lotsa Heart Elephant. Outside of Disney productions, *The Care Bears Movie* became the highest-grossing animated movie of all time – not bad given their humble beginnings. But the one thing that always rang true is how much personality and charm each bear had, which is why they became one of the biggest and most-loved toys of the Eighties.



Though dozens of additional Care Bears and cousins were added in the years after the brand's launch, the original line consisted of only ten Care Bears.

The Legacy

Since the Care Bears' popularity peaked in the mid-Eighties, the series has been relaunched multiple times. Because each toy company that has relaunched the series has wanted to make a success of it, it means that fans are spoilt for choice with toys to buy, movies to watch, and cartoons to indulge in. Care Bears have even found a home on Netflix, through the new series *Care Bears* and *Cousins*.





Information

Manufacturer: Rubik's Brand

First Released: 1980

Expect to pay: £10.99

RUBIK'S CUBE

Like some of the greatest inventions in history, the Rubik's Cube was something of a happy accident. Its creator, Hungarian professor Ernő Rubik, built the three-by-three cube in the Seventies as a learning tool for his students. He wanted to show them an object where all the parts could be moved independently without the entire structure falling apart. It was only when Rubik scrambled his cube that he realised the difficulty trying to restore it back to its original order – thus, with the addition of coloured panels, the Rubik's Cube was born.

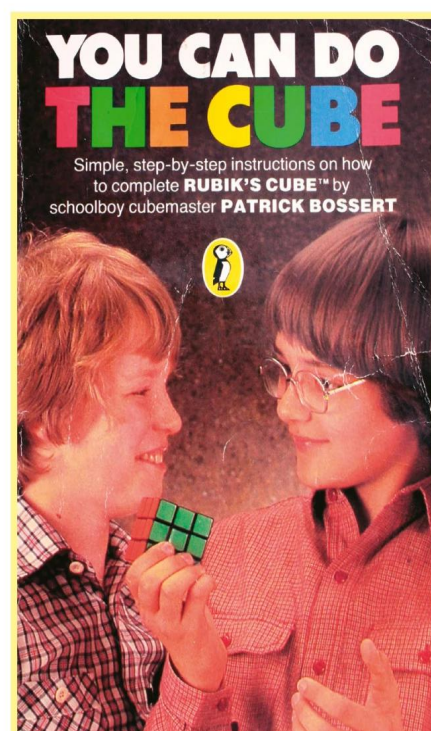
Or rather, the Magic Cube was born. That's what Rubik first named his creation in 1975 when it was sold in toy shops around Budapest. As its popularity grew, the toy earned international attention and after

spotting its potential at a German toy fair in early 1979, Ideal Toys signed a deal to sell the puzzle in the West. Just one year later, the rebranded Rubik's Cube hit the shelves. Sales exploded following TV adverts and it blossomed from simple toy to cultural craze.

The difficulty in solving the puzzle led to speedcubing tournaments, while books on how to solve the cube became bestsellers. It won awards for its simple but engaging design, as cube owners worldwide tried to click their way around the puzzle, matching up all the coloured tiles. It was frustrating but strangely addictive, as you felt there was a technique you hadn't quite learned yet, a solution you hadn't quite stumbled upon. As such, the sight of a scrambled Rubik's Cube on household shelves became one of the iconic images of the Eighties.



The most 'common' solution to the cube involves solving it layer by layer. The 'top' layer is solved first, followed by the middle layer, then the final remaining layer.

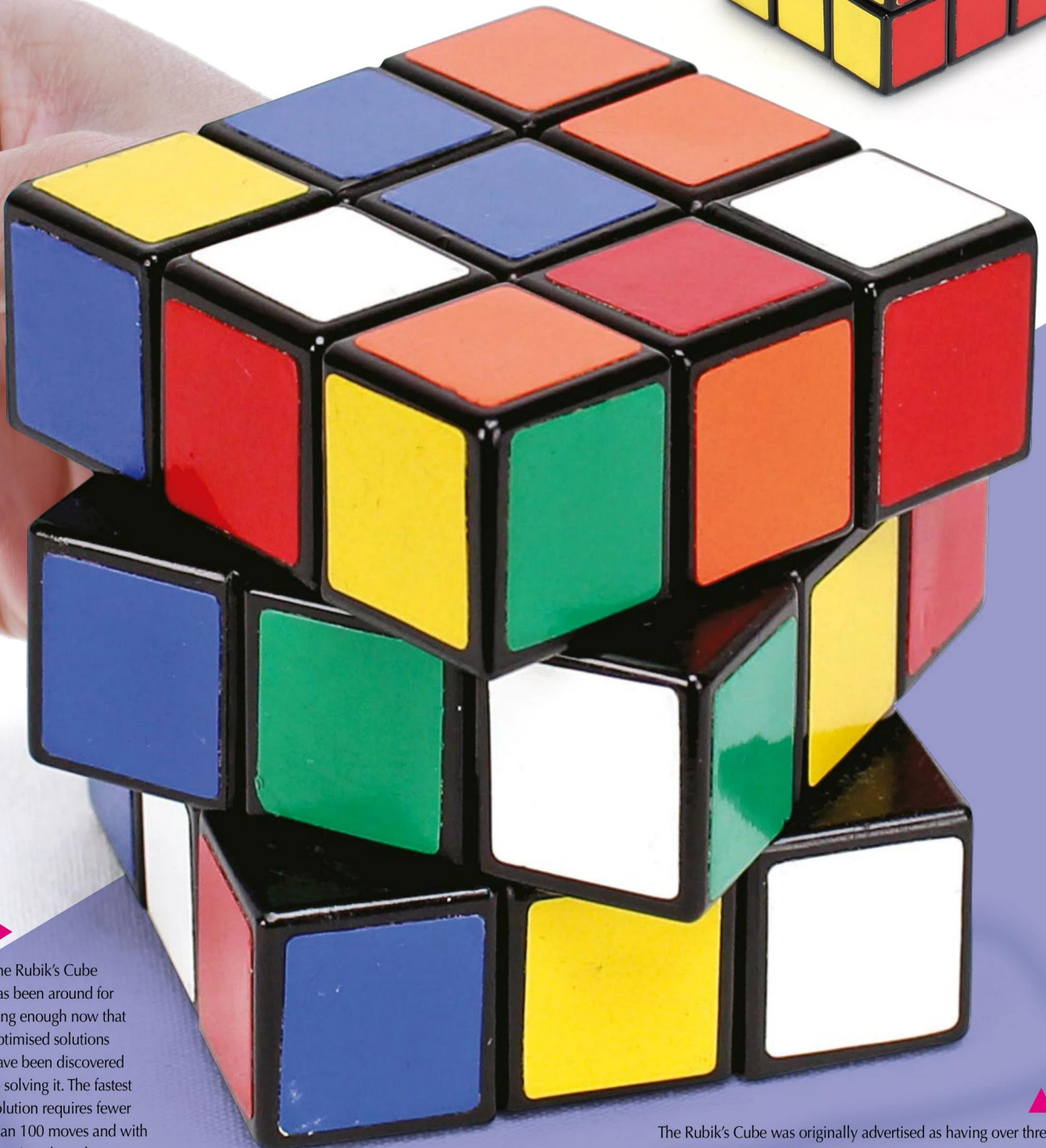
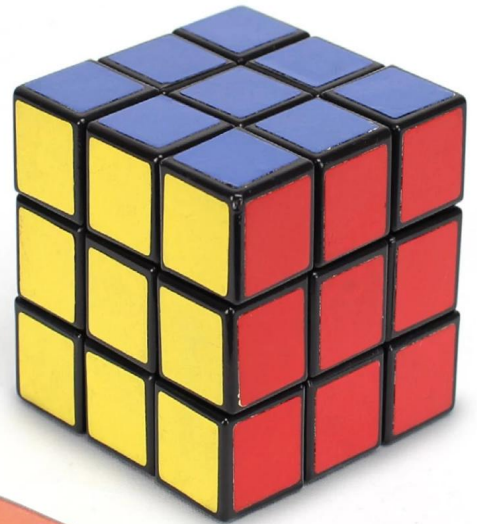


© Alamy/Retromash.com

The Legacy

Sales of the Rubik's Cube died down in the early Eighties, but experienced a surprising resurgence from 2000 onwards, when the patent expired and other brands of cubes began to hit the market. The 2003 World Rubik's Games Championships became the first speedcubing tournament in over 20 years, while the rise of YouTube and video tutorials helped keep the speedcubing community active many years later. It's been estimated over 350 million cubes have been sold worldwide.

If you wanted to cheat a Rubik's Cube, you could dismantle it without too much difficulty. Just turn the top layer by 45 degrees and then pry one of the edge cubes away from the other two layers. Reassemble it in the order you like and you could pretend you solved the cube by yourself.



The Rubik's Cube has been around for long enough now that optimised solutions have been discovered to solving it. The fastest solution requires fewer than 100 moves and with practice, the cube can consistently be solved in under one minute.

The Rubik's Cube was originally advertised as having over three billion combinations, but this is actually understating how tricky the puzzle is. There are actually 43 quintillion solutions, helping explain why so many players struggle to solve it.

Even though it would be manufactured in a variety of shapes and sizes, this grinning orange Space Hopper is often considered to be the 'original'

Information

Manufacturer: Ledragomma

First Released: 1969

Expect to pay: £9.99

SPACE HOPPER

They were exhausting, they were chaotic, and they were a lot of fun. Space Hoppers were the coolest way for kids to get around, bouncing on a giant rubber ball with a grinning monster face painted on the front. Space Hoppers originated in Italy, where they were created by Aquilino Cosani, inventor of the Swiss ball and co-owner of the firm Ledragomma.

He called the toy 'Pon-Pon' when he patented the idea in 1968, but it wasn't long before its popularity saw a host of imitators. Mettoy was the first company to bring Space Hoppers to the UK market, which were originally a blue colour. The revised version, in orange with ribbed handles, would soon follow and become the 'iconic' Space Hopper.

Space Hoppers were designed for children to use, which meant they were the right size for small legs to kick off the ground. It was much harder for adults to use Space Hoppers, owing to the fact they had much longer legs! Larger 'adult' versions were later made.



Their enduring popularity means Space Hopper events are still being held, such as Space Hopper races. Ashrita Furman is the fastest man in the world on a Space Hopper, doing the 100 metres race in 30.2 seconds.



- | Comp. Retail | Argos Price |
|---|-------------|
| £11.42 | £7.95 |
| 2. Sunbeam by Raleigh "Chippy" Cycle. With built-in stabilizers. Rear wheel 9" (22.8 cm). For inside leg 14½" to 17½" (36.8 to 44.4 cm). Cat. No. 350/6491 | |
| £11.45 | £9.45 |
| 3. Tri-ang "Mars" Trike. Adjustable seat. For inside leg 15" to 17" (38.1 to 43.2 cm). Cat. No. 350/6460 | |
| £11.75 | £8.95 |
| 4. Bantel Racer Trike. Adjustable steel seat. Cat. No. 350/0136 | |
| £7.66 | £5.25 |
| 5. Play-Way "Scorpion" Pavement Cycle. Detachable stabilizers. Front wheel cable brake. 12" (30.5 cm) wheels. For inside leg 13½" to 17" (34.3 to 43.2 cm). Cat. No. 350/5155 | |
| £25.25 | £17.45 |
| 6. Bantel 3-Wheel Scooter. Height 30" (76.2 cm). Cat. No. 350/0129 | |
| £6.23 | £4.25 |
| 7. "Pony" Pavement Cycle. Detachable stabilizers. Front wheel cable brake. 12" (30.5 cm) wheels. For inside leg 15" to 19" (38.1 to 48.2 cm). Cat. No. 350/6518 | |
| £21.99 | £17.95 |
| 8. Dekkertoys "Olympic" Punchball Mk. II. Mounted on a wooden footboard. Height to centre of ball, adjustable from 36" to 45" (91.4 to 114.3 cm). Cat. No. 350/5571 | |
| £7.55 | £4.99 |
| 9. Crescent "Cheyenne" Rifle. 100 shot repeater cap rifle. Length 28" (71.1 cm). Cat. No. 350/5595 | |
| £2.56 | £1.75 |
| 10. Wembley "Spacehopper". Moulded vinyl. Inflates to 60" (152.4 cm) circ. Cat. No. 350/0026 | |
| £3.03 | £1.99 |
| 11. Dekkertoys Wendy House. Tubular plastic frame. Flame retarded cotton walls with PVC roof and door. Size 46" x 30" x 46" high to apex (116.8 x 76.2 x 116.8 cm). Cat. No. 350/5588 | |
| £8.55 | £5.75 |
| 12. Flyer Senior Roller Skates. Ball bearing wheels. Adjustable for shoe sizes 9 junior to 8 adult (27 to 42). Cat. No. 350/5564 | |
| £6.10 | £4.25 |
| 13. Crescent "Texas" Double Holster Set. 2 die cast metal 100 shot repeater pistols. Length of gun 8½" (20.9 cm). Cat. No. 350/5605 | |
| £2.61 | £1.75 |

If you think Ashrita Furman's 100-metre dash record is too hard to beat, his other record is even tougher. He's raced the fastest mile on a Space Hopper, covering the distance in 15 minutes and three seconds along the Great Wall of China!

The Legacy

Although Space Hoppers have declined in popularity, one aspect of them stubbornly lives on – world record attempts. In March 2013, the world record was set in Johannesburg for the most people simultaneously hopping for one minute, when 2,943 people beat the previous record of 2,518.



Information

Manufacturer: Hasbro

First Released: 1947

Expect to pay: £39.95 for 'main game'

SUBBUTEO

The only thing harder than taking the perfect free-kick in the playground was mastering free-kicks in Subbuteo. The tabletop football game about flicking plastic players into the ball to pass, shoot and score was the ultimate test of skill. You needed a steady, precise hand to string together flowing football moves like Barcelona but more often than not, games of Subbuteo would end up like chaotic lower league tussles – unpredictable, messy, and a lot of fun.

Subbuteo was created after World War II, when former Royal Air Force member Peter Adolph used his free time to build a new game. He took the best elements of another football game, Newfooty, with one key change being that the players were lighter and easier to flick around. Adolph wanted to call his new game 'Hobby', but the trademark wasn't granted. Instead, he called

his take on football Subbuteo, after the Latin name 'Falco subbuteo' for the hobby bird of prey. In March 1947, the first official sets went on sale.

Although its physicality gave it immediate appeal, Subbuteo's secret weapon was its customisation. You could buy teams from Manchester United to Real Madrid, with lots of extras available for purchase such as stands and linesmen. Different players getting together meant you could combine their extras with yours, building your own dream match on your living room floor.

When Subbuteo changed its footballers from 2D 'flats' to the 3D moulds we know and love today, Newfooty couldn't compete with its resulting surge of popularity and went out of business in 1961. Without any challengers for the title of best football game, Subbuteo roared to the title, ensuring its place in the hearts of every football fan.

One unique quirk of the game is that everyone seemed to have their own football available, ranging from the official licensed footballs to some of the stranger, brightly coloured variants. Bringing your own football made the game more fun, though often resulted in arguments over which ball to use!

Subbuteo's first ever sets didn't actually include any sort of fabric 'pitch'. Instead, chalk was provided along with instructions, so players could mark a playing area onto a blanket.

The Legacy

Despite the rise of videogames like FIFA, Subbuteo remains the best way to play a 'physical' game of football without leaving the house. There's a wide range of sets available, that cover everything from the UEFA Champions League to models that have light-up bases. As always with Subbuteo, you can buy plenty of accessories too, which cover everything from every stadium stands to policemen who watch over the crowds.

Players in Subbuteo can shoot once the ball has passed the 'shooting line', which is exactly halfway between the goal line and the halfway line itself. The defending player can move the goalkeeper to save using a rod behind the goal.

The main rule of Subbuteo is that players need to make contact with the ball when they flick their figure, and the ball can't hit anyone on the other team. You also can't use the same figure for more than three consecutive flicks.

TRANSFORMERS

Best toys ever?

They're certainly Prime candidates...



While the 'more than meets the eye' tag line refers to the shape-shifting abilities of Hasbro's iconic robots, it applies equally well to the origins of the series itself. For many of us, our first real experiences of Transformers will have been watching the cartoon or circling Optimus Prime in an Argos catalogue, but the series' true origins massively predate these fond memories. You see, Transformers as we know it came about after Hasbro was impressed with two toy-lines at the Tokyo Toy Show in 1993 – Takara's Microman and Diaclone – and sought to pick them up for the Western market. Concerned about launching

two similar new toy-lines alongside one another, Hasbro instead elected to roll the two into one, rebranding models and concepts from both lines under the new Transformers banner.

The majority of the first few waves of Transformers toys were adapted – many almost unchanged – from the Diaclone 'Car Robots' toys that debuted in 1982, while those designs not focused on vehicular transformations were typically pulled in from or inspired by the Microman 'Micro Change' line. Ever wonder why Soundwave turned into a tape recorder when all his mates could turn into trucks, sports cars and planes? Now you know.

Hasbro had the toys sorted well ahead of the 1984 release of Transformers, then, but it felt the brand needed more than just a cool gimmick. It needed lore, a story, a reason for the Autobots and Decepticons to be locked into their epic clash of good versus evil. For this, Hasbro turned to Marvel Comics to produce identities and a back-story for the robots, and while Marvel's names and tech specs all made it through to us intact, a lot of the originally proposed story was altered or lost entirely in Sunbow's accompanying animated series. It might surprise you to know that Transformers was actually once considered part of the Marvel universe, with the comic series even having cameos from the likes of Spider-Man and Nick Fury at the time.

The three-pronged strike of a set of cool toys, a flashy animated TV show and a comic series where these new heroes rubbed shoulders with some of fiction's finest was an immediate success story, to the point that Takara quickly dissolved its





Masterpiece figures

While in limited supply and extremely expensive, these die-cast versions of the classic G1 characters are the most detailed and intricate you can get. While they still retain their original transformations, their metal parts, weight and price mean they're certainly not toys... well, not toys for children, at least.

"For the most avid collectors, there's even the option to expand beyond Transformers-branded items"

own original Diaclone and Microman lines to instead produce new figures under the Transformers brand for Japan as well.

GOING GLOBAL

While Hasbro did everything it could to meet incredible demand for the toys by reworking older Diaclone and Microman ideas, it wasn't long before the Takara well started to run dry and Hasbro was forced to license models from other companies just to keep up with fans who couldn't get enough, supplementing this with its own designs from around 1986 onwards. Fortunately, Hasbro had a secret weapon ready to go and that year, *Transformers: The Movie* was released. Despite the film's modest success on the cinema circuit – reports suggest that it barely managed to break even, leading to several similar Hasbro movies being downscaled or scrapped – it still enjoyed twofold success as a great advert for both brand and characters, and something that would be far more greatly appreciated and enjoyed after the fact, not entirely unlike the original *Star Wars*.

As well as new characters and toys, Hasbro could now produce reworked versions of classics like Optimus Prime and Hot Rod to appeal to the new generation of fans, as well as roping back in some of the earlier devotees. The franchise's explosive first few years would never be topped, however, and popularity wound down through the late Eighties

until the first wave of toys and media – Generation 1, as it is known – ended in the early Nineties.

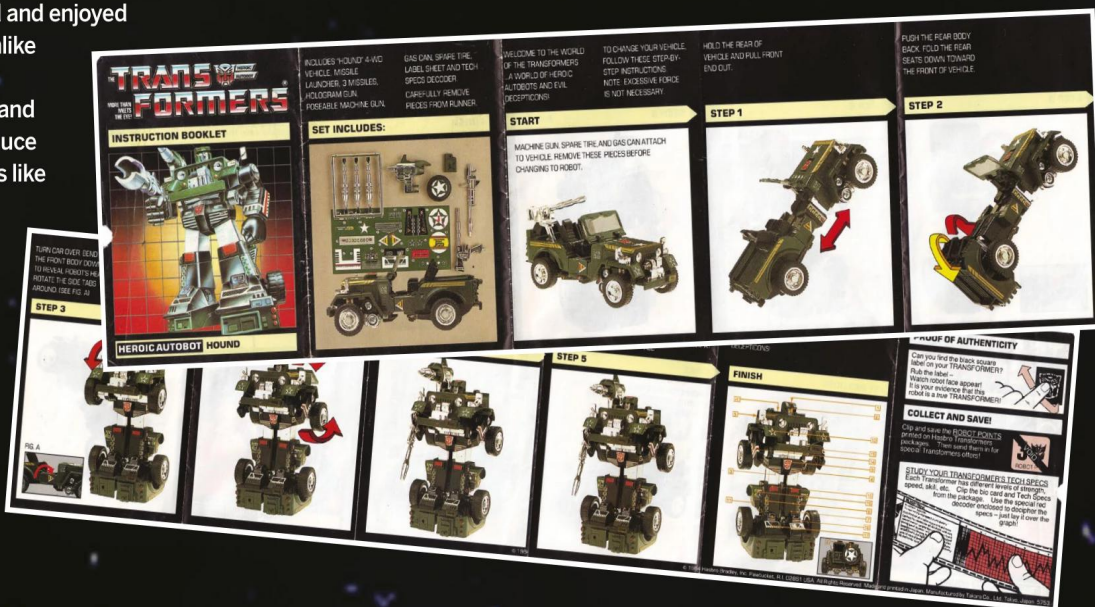
The hiatus was a short one, however, and the series has since attempted to find the Energon to return to its former glory. Numerous attempts have been made to date, with varying degrees of success – there's something intrinsically cool about toys designed so expertly that they can completely change forms, something that will likely always be able to capture the imagination of a curious child, and indeed some of the more elaborate later models still manage to amaze us adult-shaped children with their ingenious mechanisms.

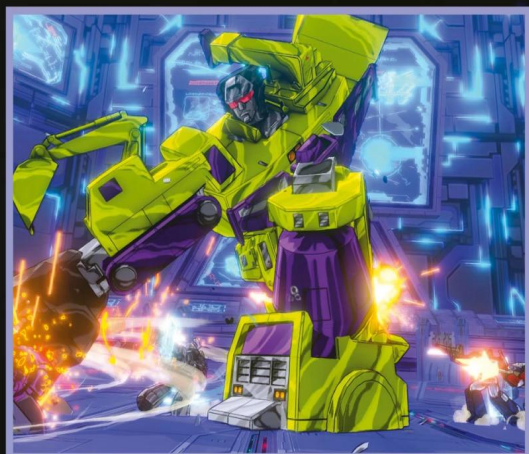
While the series could be considered past its Prime today, we'll always have that first generation of toys, shows and memories, and we're unlikely to ever be allowed to forget it all – a lot of the most popular new figures and media are those that use Generation 1 as an inspiration, and it never fails to raise a smile for anyone

old enough to remember holding their thumb on a panel to reveal an Autobot sigil, or using a piece of red film to 'decode' a secret message on the toys' packaging.

COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

A good deal of the modern collectability of Transformers merchandise comes from the fact that it's been a formative part for people of all ages – while those who grew up ramming Starscream and Bumblebee figures into one another might not have been fans of things like the later Beast Wars series, you have to remember that kids that grew up with *that* era of Transformers are likely now old enough to be looking to relive their own childhoods by celebrating where the series began. There's also that incredible initial burst of popularity to consider, and it doesn't hurt Transformers like it does many similar toy-lines. In many cases, Eighties action figures that were solid plastic with limited joints can often be found in





Transformers Devastation

It's amazing that there have been so few great Transformers videogames. Still, this 2015 release saw PlatinumGames turn its attention to the original series, lovingly replicating the style while letting you play out the kinds of battles against Soundwave and Megatron that used to exist only in your head. Oh, and the movie soundtrack is on Spotify, for the perfect accompaniment.



decent condition even today. By contrast, the myriad mechanical parts of most Transformers toys mean that any that were actually played with are much less likely to be found in functional form. Finally, there's the glamorisation of Generation 1 as the series' glory years, as evidenced by the frequent reboots and references to the time that the Transformers ruled the world. Put all of this together and that original Optimus Prime starts to look more appealing by the second.

There's also the fact that for fans of Transformers, there's just so much out there to collect. Whether you want to stockpile classic comics, load up a cabinet with the original figures (or the super-awesome metal Masterpiece editions that will run you up hundreds of pounds) or round up as much other merch as you can, there are loads of variants out there that allow collectors on every level of budget to start building up an impressive

assortment of transforming goodness. For the most avid collectors, there's even the option to expand beyond Transformers-branded items – GoBots (later picked up by Hasbro and turned into an alternate Transformers universe), Diaclone and Microman figures related to early Transformers lines can still be found if you have the time, money and inclination to do so. There was even a super-limited run of Diaclone toys released in the US before they were picked up to be rebranded as Transformers. If you see something that looks like a knock-off, it's always best to double-check – these things could be worth silly money to the right collector.

Transformers: The Movie

No, not the recent quick-cut, ugly robot music videos – the 1986 animation. A cult classic despite being something of a box office bust, it's still very enjoyable today. Peter Cullen's commanding performance as Prime amid a star-studded cast (including Eric Idle, Leonard Nimoy and Orson Welles) and the soundtrack is incredible. You got the touch...

G1 Optimus Prime

It was always the one everyone wanted and with good reason – Optimus Prime, leader of the Autobots, is just a plain badass and his figure was originally the biggest (and therefore best, in the eyes of a child) of the bunch. There exist plenty of variant models and re-releases of Prime, although the size and complexity of the truck (usually complete with trailer) means it's consistently one of the most expensive Transformers to pick up, regardless of variant or condition. Still, it's fair to say that every collector should have a Prime of some kind or another – there's no excuse not to.



CABBAGE PATCH DOLLS

They were cute, they were adorable, they had fat squidgy faces, and everyone loved to hug them close.

We're not talking about toddlers but the Cabbage Patch Kids they used to play with, the big-faced fabric creations charming their way into the hearts of kids and adults alike.

They were created by Xavier Roberts, a 21-year-old art student in Cleveland. He used quilting skills learned from his mother to stitch together fabric dolls, which he called The Little People. Although Roberts didn't sell his dolls, he took them to various art fairs where they eventually drew the attention of toy-maker Coleco. Coleco acquired the licence for the dolls and renamed them Cabbage Patch Kids, beginning mass production in 1982.

Cabbage Patch Kids were somewhere between dolls and teddy bears, having the

human features of the former but the soft squishiness of the latter.

Although they didn't have any of the 'features' of advanced dolls, such as the ability to talk, Cabbage Patch Kids didn't need them. They radiated personality, warmth and charm, their unique look and soft feel making them a must-have toy as soon as they went on sale.

One unique quirk of production also enhanced their appeal. The original dolls had nine head variations to try to keep each doll unique, in a nod to the hand-stitched nature of the The Little People. That made Cabbage Patch Kids even more collectible, as fans didn't just stop at one...



Information

Manufacturer: Coleco

First Released: 1982

Expect to pay: £15

Coleco went out of business, but the Cabbage Patch Kids story didn't end there. The licence to manufacture them has been passed from one toy company to another, and Wicked Cool Toys is the current manufacturer of the famous dolls. Along the way, the Cabbage Patch Kids were taken to space in 1985, and were used as the official mascot of the 1992 United States Olympic Team.

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Each Cabbage Patch Kid was sold with a birth certificate showing the date and time of their birth, giving the dolls an extra degree of authenticity. To date, more than 130 million of the dolls have been 'born' around the world.

The Cabbage Patch Doll line has come a long way from its humble origins. With the range still going strong, more and more designs continue to be introduced, with adoptable pets being among the new additions to the family.



During the late 1990s, The Ohio Art Company was in financial trouble even though it had sold more than 100 million units by 1999. Luckily, John Lasseter, the director of *Toy Story 2*, wanted to incorporate the toy into his movie. With an estimated \$50 million worth of free advertising, sales boomed by 20 per cent.

The Legacy

The Etch A Sketch has remained a popular purchase for most of the past 50 years and there have been numerous attempts to keep it fresh. The Animator was released in the 1980s, for instance, incorporating a low-res dot matrix display, while a colour version was launched in 1993. Today, it's possible to buy Etch A Sketch mobile apps, plus a scene of dedicated artists has grown around the device, each of whom are producing the most astounding lineographic artwork.

Information

Manufacturer: The Ohio Art Company

First Released: 1960

Expect to pay: £15

The Ohio Art Company had originally spotted L'Écran Magique at an International Toy Fair in Nuremberg, Germany, in 1959. It decided to pass on the idea, however, only picking it up later when it saw the idea again and felt it could be a huge hit. It was released in time for Christmas 1960.

MAGIC Etch A Sketch SCREEN



THE AMAZING
Etch A Sketch

HOURS OF
fascinating

FUN

FOR THE ENTIRE
FAMILY

MAGIC SCREEN

PRINT!
WRITE!
DRAW!

turn face down
and shake to erase

THE AMAZING

Etch A Sketch

unlimited design possibilities

MAGIC S

SKETCH

ANOTHER

ETCH A SKETCH

Even though it was arguably less versatile than pen and paper, there was something rather charming about the simple-looking Etch A Sketch. Popular during the 1970s, it presented kids with a blank canvas that was crying out for input. Indeed, few could resist fiddling with the knobs, even if most of us ended up drawing simple stuff like houses, flowers and the crudest of faces.

Many of us knew that one kid, of course, who would create jaw-dropping images that would have truly amazed the playground, if only the plastic drawing toy had not jiggled around so much in their bag. But that was the beauty of André Cassagnes' invention: it could unleash creativity on the most basic of levels and yet promise so much more.

Cassagnes was a French electrician and, in 1955, he had noted how an electrostatic

charge was able to cling aluminium to glass. It prompted him to develop L'Écran Magique, or The Magic Screen, which was eventually picked up by The Ohio Art Company for \$25,000 and handed to chief engineer Jerry Burger to help perfect for the masses.

Key to the toy was a fine aluminium powder mixed with tiny polystyrene beads that allowed for even distribution. A stylus operated by two knobs could then be moved vertically and horizontally, scraping the aluminium from the screen to create black lines.

In doing so, artworks sprang from the screen before being erased by shaking the toy so that the powder would resetttle. Such was its attraction that it sold in its millions, with Ohio Art launching "cool blue" and "hot pink" versions alongside the traditional red framed version during the 1970s.

Among those who have proven rather proficient at creating Etch A Sketch drawings is Jeff Gagliardi, of Boulder, Colorado, who takes between five and 20 hours to produce his amazing artwork using nothing but the toy. But while he picked up the skill as an art student in the School of Visual Arts in New York City in the 1970s, he never actually had one as a child.



The reason the lines are black is because the interior of the Etch A Sketch itself is dark. The background is only revealed to the user when the aluminium powder is moved away by the built-in stylus, allowing for the stark contrast with the light grey of the rest of the screen.

HUNGRY HIPPOS

Information

Manufacturer: Milton Bradley

First Released: 1978

Expect to pay: £10-15 (reprint),
£30-35 (original)

Board games have grown and evolved a lot in the last few decades but even so, there remains something oddly cathartic of the stress-relieving chaos of *Hungry Hippos*. The game itself couldn't be simpler – just pick a coloured hippo, jam on its tail lever to extend and retract the head, and devour as many marbles as possible while other players try to do the same.

The game is actually supposed to be played by releasing just a single marble at a time and fighting to see who can gobble it up before releasing another, but *nobody* ever played it like that. Instead, it's always a free-for-all with all 20 marbles in the dish from the beginning – or at least rapidly fired into play as the game begins – and panicked tail-mashing ensues.

Parents at the time soon came to a terrifying realisation that the adverts never made apparent – *Hungry Hippos* is *loud*. The rattle of the balls pinging around the board, the mechanical clattering of both tail-smacking and heads repeatedly hitting

the plastic base, the shouts and screams of players as the madness intensifies... it's a purchase decision that many parents no doubt regretted, even if it did bring us many hours of childhood joy.

Of course, it wasn't all good news. Balls sent flying by overeager hippos would often get lost, mechanisms had a habit of sticking and the very nature of the game meant that there were only so many poundings it could endure at the hands of excitable children, leading to many copies getting broken. Cue sighs of relief from parents the world over.

Even though it makes no difference which hippo you pick, MB decided to give them all names anyway – Homer (green), Harry (yellow), Henry (orange) and Lizzie/Happy (purple/pink), depending on the version.



The hippos' heads are on a simple plastic pin hinge (some sets actually came disassembled), meaning overly aggressive play could lead to heads snapping off.



▶ The game can be over in less time than it takes to get it out and set it up, and it's really not compelling enough (for anyone over five, at least) to play for more than a few minutes.

The Legacy

This classic game has been re-released and copied countless times over the years – we've seen everything from frogs and dinosaurs to dragons and farm animals replace the titular hippos, the last of those being an official *FarmVille* game. There's been something of a craze for recreating the game in real life, too. Players team up in pairs, one lying on a mat or skateboard with a bucket or similar receptacle for grabbing the large balls, with the second pushing and pulling the lying player by the feet so they can reach and return their balls. Crazyiness...

▼ Given the tendency for balls to go missing, resourceful parents found that these could be replaced with regular glass marbles of the correct size. Which made the game even louder.



VIEW-MASTER

Many children of the Seventies and Eighties have fond memories of gazing into one of these mesmerising viewfinders. But it might surprise you to learn that the View-Master itself actually dates all the way back to the late 1930s, and it was never initially intended to be a toy.

The device was originally designed for viewing what were effectively 3D effect postcards – photos and dioramas of places, landmarks and events, rather than the movie stills or cartoon characters most of us recall.

Its more serious applications go even further too, with the US military being supplied with 100,000 of the units during World War II for use with specially commissioned slides to train soldiers in vessel recognition and range-finding for high-calibre weapons.

The View-Master's first major step to becoming something more playful came in 1951 with the company's acquisition of rival Tru-Vue and with it, its lucrative Disney licence. Two decades later, under the ownership of GAF, popular TV shows and comics were the main focus of new slide reels – you name it, there's every chance it had a seven-image stereo slideshow at some point over the years.

General technological advances in the world around it started to force View-Master even further into its role as a toy for younger children, too – by the mid Eighties, things like the TomyTronic 3D games had made static stereo images that much less impressive to all but the youngest of eyes. But when those were *your* young eyes, staring into those lenses, feeling and hearing the satisfying clunk of the mechanical level switching one amazing 3D image for another, felt like absolute magic.

Each View-Master reel features seven images across 14 slides, as it presents two near-identical slides (one per eye) to simulate the same sense of depth your eyes perceive when looking at something in the real world. Tens of thousands of unique reels exist, depicting everything from dinosaurs and princesses to mushrooms and political events.



Information

Manufacturer: Sawyer's/GAF/
VMI/Tyco/Mattel
First Released: 1939
Expect to pay: £5-10 for
common models

The technique works by isolating what each eye sees and showing each a slightly different image, either one specially created (to replicate the slight horizontal variance observed due to your eyes being a short distance apart) or one altered to have the same effect.



Many of the viewers – this particular one is the Model J – feature this little window onto the card part of the disc.

The Legacy

While it once required a bulky viewer and slides just to produce a simulated 3D image, stereoscopic 3D is everywhere today. From cinema-packing 3D movies to the glasses-free variant used in devices like the Nintendo 3DS, the technology has come a long way. Rather than being left behind by this progress, the View-Master brand has evolved alongside it. Made by Mattel, modern View-Masters use smartphones to deliver bespoke virtual reality experiences, not unlike those possible with Google Cardboard and Gear VR.

This chunky lever is what you pull to rotate the reel to the next image, and reaching for it was always exciting when you'd just started looking at a new reel for the first time. The mechanism makes a trademark clunking sound as the gears move the next image into view.



SONY WALKMAN

Information

Manufacturer: Sony
First Released: 1979
Expect to pay: £400+



The Walkman has gone from a music revolution in the Eighties (a revolution that Sony even called out in its advertising campaign) to a cultural icon. The Walkman is the device that had millions of teens creating their own mixtapes of tracks and sharing them with friends. It's the product used in modern films to date flashback sequences or time-travel sections. And it's the device that kick-started the portable music industry.

Before the Walkman, the only way to listen to music on the go was with a portable radio, playing one of a small number of standard music stations. Cassettes changed all of that, and allowed users to customise their listening experience with their favourite albums and artists. Enjoying your own music outside of your

home was an exciting prospect, and Sony made sure to put the focus on the device's potential.

The Japanese company advertised the Walkman as a culturally definitive product, but one that was incredibly personal thanks to the ability to create your own playlists. For Sony, it was the best of both worlds – they created a mass-market product that still felt unique to each individual. The Walkman was incredibly popular with teens, appeared in some of the Eighties' most iconic movies, including *The Terminator*, *Back To The Future* and *A View To A Kill*.

The brand lived on though MP3 players and music-focused phones until 2015, when Sony replaced the Walkman app on its own-branded smartphones with an app simply called 'Music'.

1. Alba CP16 Personal Stereo Cassette Player. Fast forward and auto controls. Operates from 3 x LR6 batteries (order 3 of 9801011 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109642
Our Price £9.95

2. Alba CP16 Personal Stereo Radio/Cassette Player. Medium and stereo VHF waveband coverage. FM stereo indicator. Fast forward and stop controls. Operates from 2 x LR6 batteries (order 2 of 9801011 at 26p each).
Cat. No. S109643
Our Price £19.95

3. Fergusson ST43 Personal Stereo Cassette Player. Chrome and in-tape facility. Medium and stereo VHF waveband coverage. Complete belt clip. Operates from 2 x LR6 batteries (order 2 of 9801011 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109676
Our Price £18.95

4. Toshiba KT4016 Personal Stereo Cassette Player. Chrome and in-tape facility. Medium and stereo VHF waveband coverage. Complete belt clip. Operates from 2 x LR6 batteries (order 2 of 9801011 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109724
Our Price £13.95

5. Cathay MC180 Personal Stereo Cassette Player. Fast forward, auto-reverse, LED for tape direction. Operates from 2 x LR6 batteries (order 2 of 9800098 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109690
Our Price £23.95

6. Sanyo MGP30 Personal Stereo Cassette Player. 3-band graphic equalizer. Belt clip and carry case. Operates from 3 x LR6 batteries (order 3 of 9800098 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109779
Our Price £32.95

7. Fergusson ST48 Personal Stereo Cassette Player and Speakers. Features balance control, locking fast forward and auto-stop. Supplied with 2 x LR6 batteries (order 2 of 9800098 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109731
Our Price £32.95

8. Sanyo MGP SP Personal Stereo Cassette Player and Speakers. Features balance control, locking fast forward and auto-stop. Supplied with 2 x LR6 batteries (order 2 of 9800098 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109763
Our Price £19.95

9. Sanyo MGP59 Personal Stereo Cassette Player/Radio. Medium and stereo VHF waveband coverage. Complete with belt clip. Operates from 3 x LR6 batteries (order 3 of 9800098 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109700
Our Price £24.95

10. Fergusson ST44 Personal Stereo Cassette Player/Radio. Medium and stereo VHF waveband coverage. 3-band graphic equalizer. Complete with belt clip. VHF Mono Switch. Operates from 2 x LR6 batteries (order 2 of 9800098 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109717
Our Price £28.95

11. Sanyo MGP9 Personal Stereo Cassette Player. Auto-stop and locking fast-forward. Complete with belt clip. Operates from 3 x LR6 batteries (order 3 of 9800098 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109669
Our Price £15.95

12. Bush 3300 Personal Stereo Cassette Player. Fast forward and stop control. Complete with carrying strap and belt clip. Operates from 3 x LR6 batteries (order 3 of 9800098 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109652
Our Price £12.95

13. Fergusson ST47 Personal Stereo Cassette Recorder/Radio. Medium and stereo VHF waveband coverage. Built-in microphone for record system. Operates from 2 x LR6 batteries (order 2 of 9800098 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109748
Our Price £37.95

14. Toshiba KT4046K Personal Stereo Cassette Player/Radio. Medium and stereo VHF waveband coverage. 3-band graphic equalizer and Dolby B noise reduction. Metal and chrome tape facility. Complete with belt clip. Operates from 2 x LR6 batteries (order 2 of 9800098 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109762
Our Price £62.95

15. Sanyo MGP600 Personal Stereo Cassette Player. 4-band graphic equalizer. Dolby noise reduction. Auto-reverse and metal tape facility. Supplied with belt clip, hand strap and headphones with superbass response. Operates from 2 x LR6 batteries (order 2 of 9800098 at 50p each).
Cat. No. S109755
Our Price £49.99

16. Universal AC/DC Mains Adapter. Multi-voltage adapter/battery eliminator. 6-way output. Converts mains to 3.4, 5, 6, 7.5, 9 or 12V a.c. with heads and plug. Size 2 1/4 x 3 1/2 x 1 1/4 inch.
Cat. No. S351905
Our Price £6.99

17. Rose RE4100 Mini Speakers. Provide loudspeaker output from personal stereo cassette systems with heads and plug. Size 2 1/4 x 3 1/2 x 1 1/4 inch.
Cat. No. S351905
Our Price £6.99

18. Please note batteries are not supplied with any item.

To ensure continued high sound quality, clean tape heads regularly. Please see our audio care products on page 246.

personal stereos

All personal stereos have an AC socket for connection to the mains only through an AC adapter such as item 16.

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The Hotline button reduced the volume of the music slightly and if you spoke into the microphone on the Walkman, the other listener would hear you through their headphones, over the music.



Music on the move

Launched in 1992, Sony's MiniDisc player/recorder was the first serious successor to the Walkman, but the format never really took off. Soon, though, digital music took over, with MP3 players like Apple's iPod allowing users to store thousands of songs in a device smaller than a Walkman. Nowadays, most music fans either store songs on their smartphones, or stream music over the internet through services like Spotify.



Dual headphone jacks meant two people could listen to the music at the same time – as long as they had their own pair of headphones.



The number of cassette tapes you could carry was the only limit on your portable music collection. As well as buying prerecorded albums, you could compile your own mixtapes.



The Walkman didn't need much power, and required just one AA battery. It could also be powered via the DC In jack if you didn't have a battery handy.

THUNDERCATS

Thunder... Thunder... Thunder... ThunderCats!

Akira. Pokémon. *Ghost in the Shell*. Studio Ghibli. We're used to Japanese animation being a major part of our entertainment scene nowadays, but that wasn't always the case. It wasn't until the late Seventies that the Western world started getting its first taste of Japanese animation on Saturday morning TV, thanks to the first wave of Far East

imports such as *Battle of the Planets* and *Star Blazers*.

Those Japanese cartoons immediately stood out straight from everything else shown on Saturday mornings, as Japanese animation dazzled young eyes. The flowing lines, the fine detail, the shadows and shading, it was more dramatic than American animation

and was used to create fantastical and outlandish designs. But the problem with Japanese cartoons is they were created for Japanese audiences, the storylines either being mature in tone or needing in-depth knowledge of Japanese manga to support the complex plots. Japanese cartoons had to be repackaged and repurposed for Western audiences. But what if there was a



show that could combine the best of both, fusing the muscle of American story-telling with the finesse of Japanese animation?

That's how ThunderCats was born. Starring the flame-haired Lion-O, it had the eccentric, fantastical design of Japanese animation and the clear, punchy story-telling and production of American cartoons. The show was animated by Japan's Pacific Animation Corporation but everything else was handled in the United States, from the writing to the voice-acting. Just like the show itself was anchored around the explosive clash between sci-fi and fantasy elements, ThunderCats brought the strengths of Western and Eastern cartoons hurtling together.

Not that having the best of both worlds made ThunderCats an easy cartoon for Rankin-Bass Animated Entertainment to oversee. The company was based in New York, and there weren't many animated series based on the East Coast of the US at the time. It meant scriptwriters were hard to find, especially those who'd respond to the call for this strange new cartoon. Rankin-Bass even gave peripheral staff like audio engineers a crack at writing the scripts. In the meantime, cultural differences made it difficult for the Americans and Japanese to work together. Often, the Japanese studio would agree to a request even though they knew it would be impossible, owing to their cultural

aversion to saying no. They also rankled whenever they'd see 'horde' in the scripts, as they didn't like drawing big crowds. But the unusual partnership ultimately proved a successful one when ThunderCats finally made its debut.

GOING GLOBAL

In a time when *My Little Pony & Friends* and *The New Scooby-Doo Mysteries* were making their bow, it doesn't take a genius to work out why ThunderCats had an immediate impact. Cat-like humanoids versus the creepy mummified Mumm-Ra? It burst off the screen with creativity and imagination oozing from every pore, blowing away the other cartoons it was



competing against on Saturday mornings. Even the intro was a huge statement of intent – full of explosive action, backed by a bombastic theme tune that rattled around in your head long after the cartoon started.

Led by Lion-O, the ThunderCats are forced to flee their dying home world of Thundera. The Mutants of Plun-Darr, under Mumm-Ra's command, want to steal the Sword of Omens from the group, which contains the legendary Eye of Thundera. A series of events sees the ThunderCats versus Mumm-Ra battle take place on Third Earth, but the how and why almost became irrelevant. What was important was the ThunderCats were the good guys, Mumm-Ra and the Mutants were the bad guys, and each episode revealed more about the mysteries of Third Earth, where the two sides battle in amazingly named places like the Whirlpool of Despair.

Just like the *Dungeons & Dragons* cartoon, *ThunderCats*' huge cast meant everyone had a favourite. Some were drawn to the raw speed of Cheetara, Tygra's whip skills made his action scenes the most exciting, while others admired the raw power and technical wizardry of Panthro (even his fear of bats made him strangely likeable). Then there was leader Lion-O. Rather than being the typical hero that viewers could relate to, Lion-O was different. He had wild, untamed flame-coloured hair like a lion, a bright blue leotard and tanned skin.

The storylines were also positive and each episode imparted a moral lesson, making *ThunderCats* a cartoon parents would be happy letting their kids watch. A psychologist was even brought in to review the scripts, writing brief reports on the first 65 episodes for commissioning bosses to read. As *ThunderCats* went from strength to strength, its popularity exploded in unusual and unexpected ways. Official records in the

US showed that for the first time ever, some parents even called their baby daughters Cheetara. Action for Children's Television lobbied for the cartoon to be removed from the air, arguing that it was little more than a disguised toy commercial and its influence over children was too great. *ThunderCats* even became a stage play in the US.

COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

Ask anyone you know to recall something from the Eighties and *ThunderCats* is one of the first answers that will come up. Even though it's competing with other memorable cartoons, *ThunderCats* remains one of the most symbolic of the Eighties, Lion-O being one of the iconic images from that era. Why? Because *ThunderCats* belongs exclusively to the Eighties.

While the likes of *Danger Mouse* have had recent successful reboots and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* now has CGI movies dominating the big screen, *ThunderCats* remains very much of its time – though a 2011 reboot arrived without much fanfare and quietly faded away when toy sales proved disappointing.

ThunderCats also has a lot of memorable hooks that fans can recall – the flame-haired Lion-O, the dazzling animation, the "Thunder, Thunder, Thunder, ThunderCats!" battle cry of its theme tune. But its iconic logo has helped it endure more than most

The Sword of Omens

The centrepiece of any *ThunderCats* collection. This is the sword that Lion-O himself wielded and while convincing parents to let you grow your hair out and dye it orange was a tall order, asking them for the Sword of Omens so you could live out your *ThunderCats* adventures seemed like a fair compromise.



"ThunderCats were the good guys, Mumm-Ra and the Mutants were the bad guys"

An iconic logo

The *ThunderCats* logo is the most recognisable imagery from the cartoon. More so than Lion-O's wild design, even. The *ThunderCats* logo dominated their clothing, the Sword of Omens, the intro, it was *everywhere* you looked in the cartoon. So it's little surprise that the most common *ThunderCats* collector's item is a T-shirt with the logo itself on. It's almost an expected sight at comic conventions these days and it will likely endure for many decades to come, as it's the one of the key items of memorabilia for anyone wanting to celebrate their Eighties childhood.



Lion-O

One of the most iconic toys of the Eighties, everyone wanted the figurine of leader Lion-O. He had his Sword of Omens and bendable joints, so you could create action poses. It was such a popular toy that it's still being manufactured now, in almost exactly the same way it was back when it was first released.



Mad Bubbler

For those who are serious ThunderCats collectors, Mad Bubbler is the holy grail. This toy was never officially released, being cancelled before it hit the shelves. However, some prototypes exist and they change hands for up to \$25,000. Not bad for a toy that spits out bubbles...

from that era. Just like the Transformers Autobots or Decepticons logo stokes nostalgic fires within those who grew up alongside the combat vehicles on Saturday morning TV, the snarling, fanged ThunderCats logo is just as memorable as the cartoon. That's why the most common collector's item you'll see today is a ThunderCats T-shirt with the metallic logo in the middle. Simple. Easy. Iconic. Nostalgic.

For collectors who want to delve further than just T-shirts, ThunderCats was also a toy paradise. The heroics of Lion-O, Cheetara and Panthro made them obvious choices for fans of the show, but the toy line also extended to the characters like Wilykit and Wilykat, and even the Snarf who was as loathed as he was loved.

It wasn't just that the main cast was distinct and eye-catching that made ThunderCats so appealing to collectors. It's also that new characters were regularly added to the show, created as potential toys that could be sold to fans. There were even toys created for characters who never made the cartoon itself, such as Stinger.

The toy line didn't just end in the Eighties either, as ThunderCats figures have even crossed over into the recent Funko Pop craze – proof of how popular they are as collector's items and how relevant they've managed to remain, even after all these years.



FUNNYBONES BOOKS

Do you remember the stories about skeletons who lived in a dark, dark cellar down the dark, dark staircase of a dark, dark house on a dark, dark hill? Funnybones followed the adventures of a gang of skeletons – Big Funnybone, his brother Little Funnybone, and their pets Dog and Cat.

As the books were aimed at young readers, the storylines were simple. In one book, the skeletons would keep bumping into each other during the night and fall to pieces, so called upon Dr Bones to patch them up. In another, Dog has a dream about a big juicy bone. But it was the writing style that stood out as much as the bony characters of Funnybones. Word repetition meant the white, white Dog would disappear in white, white snow while the gang took trips to places such as the dark, dark sea during dark, dark thunderstorms. The characters, the writing style and the art all combined to make for an unforgettable experience.

The books proved so popular that Funnybones went on to become an animated series, cementing its place in children's hearts. It brought the classic books to life and added a few new storylines too, such as the Funnybones finding a wishbone and deciding what to wish for. Welsh comedian Griff Rhys Jones provided the voices while the script kept the writing style intact. Whether in book form or as a cartoon, the humour shone brightly in this dark, dark tale...

The Legacy

There isn't really a modern equivalent for Funnybones, but then there doesn't really have to be. Hugely successful, Allen and Janet Ahlberg's original book series is still being published today and since there were no cultural references in the books, the tales of the fun-loving skeletons haven't aged a day. The vibrant art and energetic adventures are still as captivating nowadays for a young audience that hasn't read them before as they were when the books were first published.

It's testament to the enduring charm of Funnybones that Janet and Allan Ahlberg's books are as popular now as they ever were, and they remain in print at Penguin.

Information

Manufacturer: William Heinemann Ltd
First Released: 1980
Current Publisher: Scholastic
Expect to pay: £6.99

▶ The television adaptation of Funnybones was short-lived, running for just 12 episodes in 1992, but was well received by young viewers at the time.



▶ Little was frequently the instigator behind the Funnybones' adventures, with older brother Big always willing to help realise his younger sibling's ideas.

▶ Prolific children's authors, the Ahlbergs collaborated on many successful titles. Allan's words were always beautifully complemented by the illustrations from late wife Janet.



Information

Manufacturer Raleigh Bicycle Company

First Released 1969

Expect to pay £500

RALEIGH CHOPPER

A rough rider with a smooth look, the Chopper brought cool cycling chic to suburbia

HOW IT BEGAN

There is some debate over who actually designed the Raleigh Chopper but one thing's for certain, the bicycle was a true icon of the 1970s. Not only did it catch many an eye with its huge cow horn handle bars, elongated padded seat and back rest, it moved away from the diamond-shaped frames of old while opting for a back wheel significantly larger than the front.

As such, it was a bike that kids would drool over and they'd slap it high on their lists to Santa, despite the first editions costing a whopping £32 (equivalent to £500 today). In many ways, the steep price further enhanced the bike's attraction by giving it increased desirability in the playground. Suddenly the humble bike had transformed from a speedy mode of transport into an achingly cool fashion accessory.

But then it was always meant to be that way. The Chopper was inspired by the dragster motorbikes of the 1960s – the type that looked so good being ridden by Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda in the counterculture movie *Easy Rider*. The bicycles had a unique car-like multiple-speed gear stick on the main frame and it was nothing short of a revolution in a country where bike design had tended to be traditional and conservative. The bikes brought a flashy Hells Angels vibe to the back streets of Britain – but quite how they got there depends on which story you believe.

The traditional tale has Alan Oakley, the head of Raleigh's design department, sketching the bike on the back of an airmail envelope on a return flight from America, a country he visited to get a better handle on youth culture

(he claims to have seen Californian teenagers customising their bicycles to look like dragster motorbikes). This has long been contested by Tom Karen, former managing director of the consultancy firm Ogle Design which was used by Raleigh. Karen says he was tasked with coming up with the designs in a bid to rival Schwinn's similarly ape-handled Sting-Ray.

Either way, the effect was the same and a cult classic was born. The first prototypes were tested in 1968 and the debut version was released in the United States the following year, complete with a choice of three- and five-speed Sturmey Archer gear hubs and high back rests. These failed to sell in huge quantities but Raleigh was undeterred. It launched the MK1, bringing it to the UK, and kids immediately went crazy over them.

GOING GLOBAL

The *Easy Rider* film and its customised Harley-Davidsons (named Captain America and Billy Bike) had helped matters no end. While most kids wouldn't have seen the X-rated movie, many parents had become familiar with its carefully cultivated image and the presence of those custom motorcycles helped make the outrageous Chopper design more acceptable to those with the buying power (it's a fair bet that many parents secretly wanted one for themselves).

It didn't seem to matter that the ride itself wasn't the smoothest, nor that the steering was difficult. Kids also seemed to get over the fact that the high centre of gravity made hilly journeys a struggle. That's because the Mark 1 really was all about the design: the 20-inch rear wheel four inches larger than the front, the

"The Raleigh Chopper bikes brought a flashy Hells Angels vibe to the back streets of Britain – but quite how they got there depends on which story you believe"



wide chunky treaded tyres, the seat that had riders sitting far back over the rear wheel, and a kickstand that allowed the cycle to lean like a parked motorbike.

To that end, Raleigh was already riding on a high and the company was knocking them out in droves at its factory in Nottingham where each bike was made by hand. But it was also attracting negative attention over its safety record not only in the US but the UK too.

The issue was raised in the House of Commons by Labour MP Phillip Whitehead who called on the Secretary of State for the Environment to consider "prohibiting the manufacture of Chopper-style high handlebar bicycles for children". He said an article in the *British Medical Journal* suggested there was an accident rate of 69 per cent for such bikes, despite them making up just 20 per cent of the total.

There were also warnings about double-riding and concerns that the bikes would wobble at speed. It prompted a redesign from 1972, adding a five-speed derailleur option (that

very few bought) and a modified gear handle that sat between the legs and added a sense of maturity. The seat became shorter (albeit still long enough for two) and the handlebars were welded to prevent the bars from being inclined backwards, affecting the steering. A Chopper Sprint was also released, complete with drop handlebars (it was scrapped a year later). "Only the originators, Raleigh Industries of England, could improve such an outstanding innovation," the Mark 2 advert claimed.

Over the course of the 1970s, 1.5 million Choppers were sold

in the UK alone and they could be bought in a variety of colours including fizzy lemon, infra red and ultra violet. But even though the Chopper had transformed Raleigh's fortunes and sold in huge numbers across the world (the US had a ban on tall sissy bars but also a very wide spectrum of models and colours), by 1980 it had ceased production. Many desired the Raleigh Grifter which, manufactured from 1976, looked like it had an upside down Chopper frame and came with a three-speed hub and mudguards. The BMX craze also began to take hold.

MOST DESIRABLE

Mk1 10-speed Chopper

The rarest of all Choppers is a 10-speed Mk1 version made by Raleigh for the American market in 1970 and 1971. It was available in any colour as long as it was orange – specifically Bright Orange in 1970 and Pumpkin Orange the following year – but very few people actually bought one, which has upped the scarcity value somewhat.

As such, you'd have to part with about £2,000 to snap one up in great condition, with the models from 1970 proving to be that bit more valuable. They had all of the riding problems associated with those early versions but we'd hazard a guess that you wouldn't want to be sitting on this rare beauty anyway.



Anybody want to drag?

Blast off on your new Chopper and you're practically peeling rubber!

Chopper puts you way out front for 1970 – because the 1970 Chopper's way out front. With three options for its short-thrust Split-T-Bar power console... 3-speed, 5-speed, and a sensational 10-speed super-snarling rig with double-stick shift and special third shift – that provides super-tension to "lock you in" at any speed!!

Super styling, too! Just take a long, loving look at the racer lines of the L-bucket Dragster Saddle and new racer-height vinyl-padded roll bar. You're years ahead of the pack with Chopper!! This year there's even a girls' Chopper! See and test drive the 1970 Chopper at your Raleigh dealer. Or send this coupon with 10¢ today!

Send a full-color catalog. My 10¢ is enclosed.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____



Made in England
serviced throughout
America...
guaranteed
around the world

RALEIGH

Raleigh Industries of America, Inc.,
1168 Commonwealth Avenue,
Boston, Mass. 02134





COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

Even so, the Chopper retained its appeal and it would emerge in popular culture from time to time, such as in the pop video for Supergrass' *Alright* in 1995. It was also brought back to life in 2004 as a limited edition Mk3, which remained in production for five years.

Costing between £200 and £300, it came complete with a new seat better made for one rider and there was a gear lever on the handlebars rather than in a groin-threatening position on the frame. It also used aluminium alloy tubing rather than heavy steel. Other models have since been released including one produced for Halfords in 2014 and another in a "scooter cream" colouring in 2016. But the original 1970s models are the ones that are proving most attractive today.

Fuelled by nostalgia, thousands of collectors and enthusiasts invest great sums in their bikes, buying spares and memorabilia on the internet. They have also gathered in Northampton in years gone by for hugely popular events staged by the Raleigh Chopper Owners Club, attended by as many as 3,000.

Decent, well-maintained bikes can sell for in excess of £500 today with new, boxed Mk1 models costing many thousands for those lucky enough to find them. As with any collectibles, scarcity makes the heart grow fonder which is why bagging one of the few steel-wheeled silver jubilee specials from 1976 are still the most sought after.

That said, any Chopper for someone of a certain age is going to draw mist over the eyes. They were, after all, part of an exciting new wave of bicycles and they had bags of personality. Sure, they were unreliable and provided a harsh ride, but the scrapes kids would get into when riding or piggy-backing on them will always live fresh in the mind (and perhaps as scars on the legs). If you could bottle childhood chic, then you would have it right there.

ESSENTIAL MERCH!



CHOPPER SPRINT

Bike dealers wanted a more traditional-looking version of the Chopper to satisfy their conservative buyers so Raleigh came up with the Sprint, replacing the drop handlebars of the original with those more in keeping with a racing bike. Unfortunately, the design was far from innovative and it bombed, but collectors still like to snap them up today.



GOLD-PLATED CHOPPER

A gold-plated version of the iconic bike was developed in 1976 to mark the production of the millionth Chopper. It had followed on from a Chopper SE which celebrated the 750,000th bike, but other than the colouring the gold version didn't add anything new to the Mk2 model.



SILVER JUBILEE MODEL

This Chopper was created as a one-off to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 but it was released in August 1976 in the hope of picking up the all-important Christmas sales. It didn't sell in great numbers but looked rather snazzy, both elements combining to make it appealing to collectors.



TROLL DOLLS

It's hard to think of any worldwide phenomenon that had a humble beginning quite like Trolls. In 1959, in the small Danish town of Gjøl, Thomas Dam couldn't afford a Christmas present for his daughter. Using just his imagination and his woodcutting tools, he decided to carve a troll out of wood for her Christmas present. Word about Dam's skill soon spread around Gjøl and before long, demand for trolls meant that Dam was also carving out a future for himself in the toy industry. What became a local phenomenon became a national trend before Trolls became a huge toy fad in the United States and Europe in the Sixties.

The Trolls have changed since that fateful Christmas. They are now made of plastic rather than wood, and sheep's wool is no longer used for the hair. But the spirit of the dolls remain intact – their cheeky grin, their wildly coloured hair and their slight air of mystique. Each Troll doll is said to be a lucky charm and young minds were eager to buy into the myth, trolls often sitting alongside pencil cases and stationery during school exams.

Unlike G.I. Joe or My Little Pony, Trolls was also one of the rare toys that appealed to both sexes, thanks to later additions to the range such as Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle Trolls and Original Battle Trolls.

Imitations of the popular Troll dolls became so widespread that Dam went to court to fight those copying his famous creation. He prevailed in 2003, when the US restored copyright privileges to his family.

Information

Original Manufacturer: Thomas Dam

First Released: 1959

Current Manufacturer: DreamWorks

Expect to pay: £4.99 (12 pack of retro Trolls)

Although the Trolls are now made of plastic rather than wood and the hair used is no longer sheep's wool, one aspect of the original design remains intact. Trolls still have glassy eyes, just as they did in Dam's original creations, giving them a distinct and charming look.

The immediately distinguishing feature of each Troll is the wild, wavy hair. Designed to flow upwards and hold its own against the forces of gravity, it's often the first thing people think of when you mention Troll dolls to them.

The Legacy

Trolls have proved to be one of the most enduring toys of all time. While their popularity has gone through peaks and troughs, Trolls have never truly gone away. Even though Trolls are considered a retro toy by adults, children are discovering them for the first time ever thanks to the animated comedy *Trolls*, with Justin Timberlake providing one of the voices for the 2016 movie.

Trolls range in shape and size but in an unusual reverse of toy trends, it's often the smaller ones that are more appealing. This made them easier to carry around and their smaller size somehow contributed to their mystique and the feeling of them being detailed and well designed.



Information

Year released: Japan, July 1985,
UK: Late 1987

Original price: Japan: 54800 Yen,
US: \$199.99, UK: £149.99

Expect to pay: £20+

NES

What's noticeable about any retelling of the Nintendo Entertainment System saga is its recognised status as saviour of the videogame industry. While this is certainly true on a global scale, here in the UK the NES had to fight to earn its reputation...

Regardless of wildly erratic release dates, mastermind launch tactics, outstanding tech-specs and bewildering global sales figures, one aspect is paramount over all others: to talk about the NES is to talk about the return of the videogame industry from the brink of destruction.

But the industry has always been very much compartmentalised, and trends have never travelled well across the oceans. While America – the feeding ground of the avaricious developer – turned its back on videogames in the early Eighties, the Japanese continued with their normal game-playing lives quite happily, prompting relative newcomer, Nintendo, to bring its flourishing coin-op into homes.

This was a more significant change for Nintendo than most gamers ever realised. Up until 1983, Nintendo would've been better described as an electronic toy manufacturer – not a software or game developer. Product ranges from lightgun clay pigeon shooting to electronic love testers were far more synonymous with the name Nintendo than any living room-based entertainment.

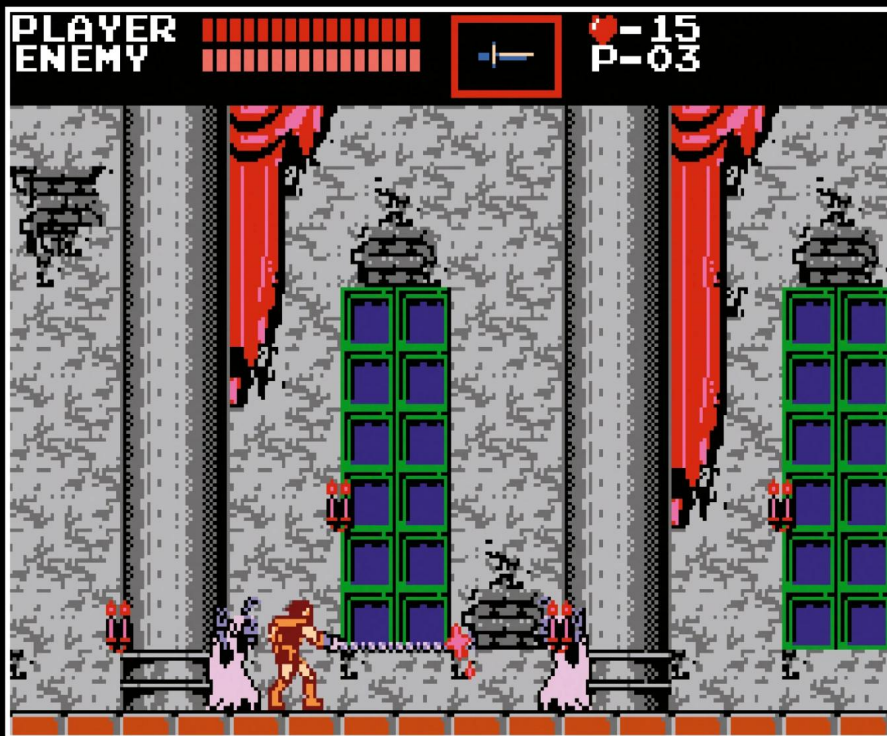
It was only natural for Nintendo to experiment with the *Pong* craze sweeping through the Seventies, and a decent addition to the list was made in conjunction with Mitsubishi in the shape of the TV Game 6 and its unimaginatively named successor, the TV Game 15. Although a worthwhile introduction, the two systems did nothing to persuade

Nintendo that home videogames were the future, and efforts shifted toward the arcades. Viewing from afar the self-destructive market saturation America was suffering from with home consoles in the late Seventies, Nintendo was resolute that pay-per-play was the only way money could be gleamed from videogames.

Rather astutely, however, it deviated from standard product ranges in 1980 as industry legend Gunpei Yokoi developed the immortal and extraordinarily successful Game & Watch series of handheld LCD units with the help of his friend and colleague, Masayuki Uemura (whom Yokoi had poached from electronics giant Sharp). At the same time, fellow game design prodigy Shigeru Miyamoto was putting the finishing



**"This new machine established
Nintendo as a world gaming
power overnight"**



▲ The humble NES *Castlevania*, which led to the brilliant *Castlevania IV*. Then the magnificent *Symphony Of The Night*. Then there was *Castlevania 64* which was... actually, scratch that last one. It was rubbish.

▼ If there was any doubt as to whether the NES retained its place in the hearts and minds of Nintendo fans around the world, the launch of a special NES Mini in 2016 put them to rest. The plug-in console sold out almost instantly, and remains extremely difficult to track down.

touches on Nintendo's eminent arcade smash, *Donkey Kong*.

This new arcade machine finally broke through the cultural barrier between the East and West, establishing Nintendo as a world gaming power overnight. Realising this was hot property, Uemera was given the previously uninspiring task of getting Nintendo home gaming units firmly encamped beneath the TVs of Japan. His brief was at once simple and impossibly demanding: this new Nintendo system must be cheaper and higher quality than the closest competition.

His concept was equally simple in application, yet intricate in construct. A major factor in Uemera's answer to this difficult question was his unexpected use of the revolutionary MOS 6502 CPU.

An equivalent of the popular Motorola 68000, Nintendo's choice of processor was surprising not because of the capability of the chip, but simply because of its age. The MOS 6502 was designed in 1975 and had already seen considerable use in the videogame industry, primarily in a cut-down version for the Atari 2600 and at the core of both the Apple I and II computers.

By the time Nintendo was drawing up designs for the Home Video Computer (as its first ROM cartridge system prototype was named), the MOS chip was a veritable home computing bargain, weighing in at less than \$30 compared to the 68000's \$179 price tag. When modified by long-lived Japanese electronics giant, Ricoh (who removed the binary decimal mode to make room for 22 extra memory registers for joypad input, sound generation, sprite based memory access and more), a deluge of game-specific blood was squeezed from the revamped 'system-on-a-chip' stone.

The final few months of development in 1983 brought all the different factions of Nintendo together. If there was a strength within the company, it was scrutinised, redeveloped and integrated into the renamed Nintendo Family Computer, or Famicom as it quickly became known. The revolutionary control system of Yokoi's Game & Watch handhelds was built into the joypads (what we now rather sanitarily refer to as the D-pad), Miyamoto's *Donkey Kong* arcade stomper was beautifully converted for the launch, strict quality controls were built into future licensing deals and a plethora of peripherals were primed to take the bare bones base unit into the next-generation of home entertainment.

On July 15th 1983, Japanese stores rang to the sound of Nintendo based sales. But the launch was not without its problems. A glitch between an erratic chipset and their attachment to the motherboard caused consistent reliability issues, and president of Nintendo, Hiroshi Yamauchi made a bold decision to recall the entire first batch of Famicoms. The corporate danger of acknowledging an immediate design issue with the new console was, he stated, secondary to maintaining Nintendo's good name in the long term. Apparently the game-playing public agreed, and bearing no grudge against the console's troubled birth, the second release of the Famicom (featuring round controller buttons replacing the previously square ones) was met with unprecedented success.



Over 500,000 units sold within the first two months of the second Japanese release, and the Famicom was subsequently distributed throughout East Asia. Retailing at ¥14,800, Nintendo managed to shift over 19 million units within its native shore alone during the impressively long lifespan of its beloved console. But over in America, the market had disappeared into a black hole of avarice, and although practically all the potential competition had gone with it, so had the customers.

Much of the feeling around Nintendo was that the cultural divide was simply too great to bridge, and attention was better spent on local retailing. But just as he'd done with the coin-op business, Yamauchi was adamant that Nintendo was going Stateside with its games and hardware. Initial licensing and distribution talks with failing Atari quickly fell through, so the task once again fell to the beleaguered, yet proven capable, Nintendo of America.

Fresh from its successful manufacture, launch and distribution of the *Donkey Kong* coin-op, NoA attempted to reignite the American gamer's consciousness with a somewhat pitiable demonstration of the Nintendo 'Advanced Video System' at the 1984 CES show. Many toy distributors openly laughed at the attempt to sell a games console, while others rushed past in embarrassment or cast vitriolic, vengeful gazes at the videogame hardware that had almost ruined them the year before. It was a categorical disaster.

A stoutly traditional Japanese man, Yamauchi steadfastly refused to accept the American rejection of his console. So, for the 1985 CES show, the infinitely resourceful NoA team cleverly redesigned the machine into the Nintendo Entertainment System



(renamed to remove any videogame connotations), deliberately creating a featureless, grey brick that in no way resembled a console, adding nuances such as a front loading cartridge slot, intended to make the system blend in with VCRs.

Packaged with a couple of fairly superfluous peripherals; a lightgun called the Zapper and R.O.B. the Robot (a marginally interactive remote controlled toy intended to work together with the games), the actual NES base unit was adequately camouflaged. This backdoor approach helped the system slip under the radar of many toy distributors, and as the Christmas season approached, the second phase of the American plan came into play.

At considerable peril to their already tenuous branch of the Nintendo Empire, NoA offered New York shop owners a risk free option for stocking the NES console over the commercial sales period. Nintendo itself would set up the store displays and grant owners a sale or return policy. If the console bombed over Christmas '85, the only ones to lose out would be Nintendo.

The gambit, while not tremendously successful, provided one saving grace for the nervous salesmen at NoA. Consoles didn't fly off the shelves as hoped (moving around 50,000 units), but the steady and hopeful sales reassured shop owners that videogames were once again a viable commodity, and very few actually took Nintendo up on its return offer.

Miyamoto hadn't been sat idle during the US crisis, either, and during 1985 he worked tirelessly to shoehorn his second arcade smash hit, *Super Mario Bros.* into a Famicom cartridge. As always, he was successful, and

In Japan the system didn't launch with *Super Mario Bros.*, instead they received the below three titles. All were conversions of arcade games, and all three have connections to Miyamoto.

Nintendo saw its opportunity to invade the US once and for all. By October, a Western version was ready to be bundled with the NES – a tactic designed to coincide with NoA's move to go national with its in-house distribution network.

Piracy was soon rife in Japan, with cloned Famicom cartridges and cheap knockoff hardware flooding in from all across Asia. The Famicom contained no form of software security other than a strict licensing agreement which bound third-party developers to Nintendo's command. When the Famicom was redesigned for the world markets, several measures were taken to pre-empt piracy or unlicensed development.

Some measures were simple and a direct quick-fix to the local troubles. World cartridges were a different shape and pin out, physically prohibiting the use of Japanese games in non-Asian consoles. A secondary, and far more complex system, was also installed in the NES machines, known as the 10NES regional lockout chip. This chip required security codes (which needed a specific and critical timing system to be applied during the code transfer) to be present on the cartridges, and the only way for developers to get these codes was to ensure their game was licensed by Nintendo.

Over the years Nintendo has been often criticised for its extremely militant approach to licensing and security, and many of those



Final Fantasy, ironically titled because Square only had enough money to publish one final game. Luckily it was a huge success.

“Shoehorning Super Mario Bros. into a Famicom cartridge was unswervingly successful – Nintendo saw its chance to invade the US once and for all”

“Although E.T. may have pushed gamers over the edge, it was merely the icing on a particularly unpalatable cake – Nintendo was adamant the same would never happen to its console”

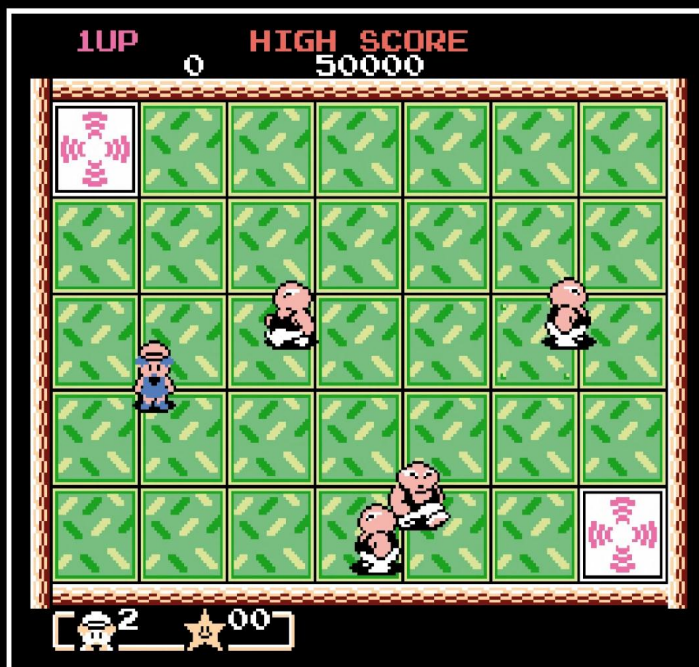
claims are valid. And yet, as we look back, the edges begin to blur as to the position Nintendo was actually in at the time. The market had only recently collapsed (at least in America), due in no small part to extreme negligence of the industry, churning out five years of expensive, atrocious quality games. Although *E.T.* may have finally been one of the games that pushed gamers over the edge, it was merely the icing on a particularly unpalatable cake, and Nintendo was adamant the same would never happen to its own console – not after the hardship it had gone through in order to resurrect the market in the first place.

To comply with the 10NES lockout system, third-party developers had to sign a strict licensing agreement that limited them to producing only five games a year while granting Nintendo complete discretion when it came to quality control. While the majority of developers balked at such oppressive restrictions, others (such as Capcom, whose first three NES titles, *Commando*, *Ghosts 'N' Goblins* and *1942* all sold over 1 million copies) accepted the stipulations and proved Nintendo's theories almost immediately.

The early successes were all the reassurance Nintendo needed to enforce its licensing agreement at all costs. Yamauchi had shown from the outset that maintaining a respected reputation was far more important to him than quick sales, and regardless of the incensed twittering of game developers eager to flood the market with mediocre games, his chokingly tight reins undoubtedly helped the console enjoy such a long life.

Unfortunately, not all developers agreed with Nintendo's philosophy, least of all the English ones.

The story of Nintendo's Japanese and American establishment has been well told, but there are a lot of other countries with a dedicated gaming population. In truth, Nintendo could reasonably ignore any other sales avenues as long as the Japanese and Americans were living and breathing videogames, and as a result the European introduction was reduced to nothing short of a stilted, insulting addendum to an otherwise grand plan.



◀ This was the first game developed by the creator of *Pokémon*, and actually, it's rather good fun even today! Kick the tiles to knock enemies over and discover secrets.

▶ *Metal Gear* didn't start out on the NES, fair enough, but it was the system Kojima wanted to develop for, and it was eventually ported – albeit in a butchered form.

Unenthusiastic distribution deals began to filter NES consoles into Europe in late '86, beginning in Scandinavia and Germany, then spreading into Spain and France before finally being brought to the UK by Mattel in the third quarter of 1987. A distinct lack of interest from Nintendo itself, coupled with Mattel's reputation as a toy company and a delay which took the console out of the technological heats, made for a hurdle that was far too high to vault in one leap.

The Sega Master System had hit the UK ground running, and while the American market may have disappeared up its own... disk drive earlier in the decade, this had created a wealth of opportunity in Britain for affordable home computers. Competing with the superior, and better established, Sega machine was one thing, but taking on the likes of the ZX Spectrum and its prolific catalogue of games on its home turf, or the astounding next-generation gaming power of the Amiga, was another entirely.

Sega claims a great deal of responsibility for ensuring the NES never gained a foothold in Europe, though in truth much of the culpability lies with Nintendo's own indifference, and to the UK in particular.

Its attention was still firmly trained on the US and Japan, where attention returned to



the original concept of the Famicom – the family computer. Peripherals to deliver on the promise made by the system's name were steadily released: a disk drive, cassette deck, keyboard, modem and BASIC cartridges were all developed, with varying degrees of success, to allow Japanese Famicom owners to expand the potential of their prized machines.

By the time Nintendo International was established to take over from Mattel, Sega was tearing full steam ahead with the Mega Drive. This was the first chink in Nintendo's armour since 1983, and by ignoring the European markets, the company gave Sega the opportunity to maintain its

developments and plan a strategy to work its way back into the primary markets. While Nintendo threw lawsuits about the place to sustain its dominion (attempting to stop everything from Rare's reverse engineering of the 10NES lockout chip to Codemaster's Game Genie peripheral and the various attempts at releasing unlicensed third-party software), Sega embraced many of the other companies and their videogaming products, granting them a platform while shoring up its increasing market share.

Aside from the shabby marketing, the late '87 UK release date of the console would have been the perfect time to own a NES. The harsh whips of Nintendo had ensured five years of only the finest games were ready and waiting. Developers had found their programming feet, while Nintendo's internal teams had fully dedicated their elite to making first-party titles. *Super Mario Bros.* came bundled for the reasonable price of £69.99 while the westernisation of Shigeru Miyamoto's celebrated *Legend Of Zelda* (the first cartridge to contain a battery backup save game feature) landed, quite by chance, at exactly the right time to reassure UK NES users.

Million-sellers were becoming increasingly common, yet the company's belief in its own divine status began to push developers to question the gospel. Thanks to the massive profits Nintendo's quality regime had granted them, they had the power to test the limits. Nintendo's authority was slipping.

Being abandoned in Europe had given the console the opportunity to grow on its own, unhindered by the Victorian parenting its American and Japanese cousins had known.

Third-party developers had lost their interest in purchasing the Nintendo Seal



▲ Konami was generally regarded as the best of the third-party developers, creating classic after classic, like *Contra* here.

of Quality and flagrant importing began across Europe. The few Italian NES owners discovered they were in the same retailing bracket as the better supported UK, while Scandinavians openly swapped games among themselves and the Spanish. Cartridges were even developed that fired a voltage spike through the 10NES chip, knocking it out and allowing unrestricted international sales of one development.

The Famicom and the NES had a strong following, but times had changed dramatically from the post-apocalyptic wasteland the machine was born into. The system was simply unable to provide the technologically advanced arcade conversions gamers were demanding. Yet this new loose leash publishers were enjoying with NES cartridges provided a crutch, which enabled the console to enter old age more gracefully than any other system had managed before it.

It was midway through the Nineties, and although people weren't queuing up to buy

NES games at midnight, neither did they resent picking up the odd Nintendo bargain even as late as 1996. By this time, the NES had once again been redesigned to account for, among other things, failing cartridge connectors which had suffered from their horizontal orientation and gathered enough oxidising dust over the years to force users to bend and twist their games to coerce reliability from the struggling components.

Another price drop to £49.99 (seeing the console actually being out-priced by one of its own games for a short while) didn't hurt the life expectancy of the old campaigner either, and as the internet began to fully emerge, fan sites, homebrew programmers, hardware hackers and dedicated gamers began to form communities in celebration of Nintendo's grandfather console. Just as before, the NES didn't break any new sales figures but, along with its games, miraculously managed to retain its original value. Even today, NES games on eBay or in a charity shop are certainly not giveaways; five quid will buy you a cartridge without a box or instructions, but little else. Not too shabby for a 30-year old format.

If anything, the impressively long life of the NES may actually have hurt Nintendo – dissuading players from upgrading to the Super NES upon demand – but it'd be hard for anyone, least of all its parent company, to resent this amazing machine for providing hundreds of thousands of hours of entertainment, billions of Yen in profit and 60 million gamers worldwide with something incredible to do with their thumbs.



▲ Squint. No, squint harder. In fact, squint hard enough and this almost looks like *Metroid Prime*. Almost... well, if you're a tramp drunk on meths.



▲ Rare was one of the earliest British developers to make games for the NES. It was purchased by Nintendo in 1994, where it stayed until 2002.





PERFECT TEN GAMES

For owners without the cartridge cleaning kit; here are ten of the best wedges of grey plastic you'll ever blow into



01



02



03



04

Duck Hunt

Released: 1984

Published by: Nintendo

Created by: in-house

By the same developer: Donkey Kong

01 Billed as the quintessential game for the clunky NES Zapper, Nintendo's repetitive duck-murdering sim allowed gamers to test their aim with the aid of canine-cohort, Mr Peepers. It was his job to startle a ball of petrified feathers into the air and yours to sight them in your pistol's crosshair. You had three shots per target and the later levels, which included infinitesimal clay pigeons, called for either a swift dead-aim or the cowardly act of pressing the gun barrel against the television. The game had a neat feature, which allowed duck-welfare enthusiasts to control the direction of the fleeing birds with a second pad and save them.

Super Mario Bros

Released: 1985

Published by: Nintendo

Created by: in-house

By the same developer: F-Zero

02 It was the block punching, pipe-travelling exploits of two Italian plumbers that finally administered the medicine to the videogame crash of the Eighties, ridding it of the noxious Martian antibodies of Atari's *ET*. Shigeru Miyamoto knew how to conjure up golden game icons and the Mario Bros are two of his most prolific. Placing the plumbers into a daring princess/mushroom rescue mission, inside a vivid, smooth-scrolling fantasy world, the game pioneered concepts such as level warping and head stomping. *Super Mario Bros* embodies everything that makes a game timeless: catchy theme, fluid gameplay, iconic characters.

River City Ransom

Released: 1985

Published by: Technos

Created by: in-house

By the same developer: Double Dragon

03 Punch-bags meet sick-bags when Alex and Ryan receive a note from evil crime-lord Slick informing them that their city is being held to ransom and Ryan's girlfriend has been abducted. Welcome to River City, a place of tongue-in-cheek humour, cartoon violence and hard-up vomiting freshmen. Using anything they can lay their fists on, our protagonists set about the streets fighting through Slick's army of students. Their strategy: force them to 'barf' and pocket their loose change. *River City's* unique fusion of a scrolling beat-'em-up and a subtle RPG mechanics combine to make it a superlative NES classic.

Mega Man 2

Released: 1998

Published by: Nintendo

Created by: Capcom

By the same developer: Devil May Cry

04 Don't let Mega Man's mountainous energy bar fool you, trying to finish *Mega Man 2* is like trying to stay alive without any kidneys. This is an unforgiving platform blaster where each level demands pinpoint precision and patience. The order in which you blast through Dr Wily's levels is completely up to you, but don't think you can use the easier stages to stockpile lives. Each level houses a bionic-boss whose special power can be acquired. These abilities give Mega Man an advantage over another boss, so choosing the optimal route through the game was how you maintained a healthy blood pressure.

Punch-Out!!

Released: 1986

Published by: Nintendo

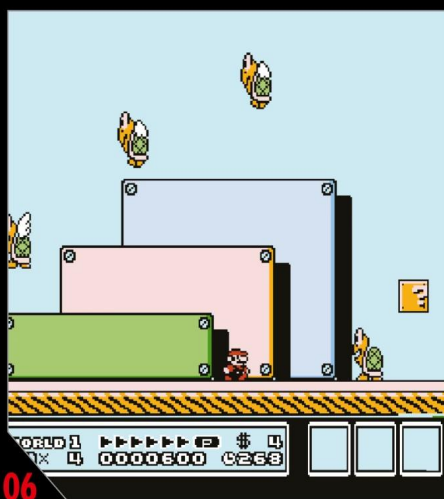
Created by: in-house

By the same developer: Lylat Wars

05 Nintendo's port of its popular Eighties arcade puncher was somewhat lost in translation when it appeared in all its 8-bit glory. The arcade's transparent fighter was omitted and in his corner stood a pale, pint-sized pugilist on a mission to topple heavyweight hard-man, Mike Tyson. It quickly collected acclaim for its accessibility and colourful roster of cartoon boxers who were forced to sop up each blow of the games trademark playability. The NES is home to the finest version of *Punch-Out!!*, which still manages to pack more of a punch than its technically enhanced SNES and Wii sequels, as well as its arcade counterpart.



05



06



07



08



09



10

Super Mario Bros 3

Released: 1990

Published by: Nintendo

Created by: in-house

By the same developer:

Pilot Wings

06 Mario's goodbye gift to the NES is a marvel. It encapsulated all the qualities of the first game while introducing a wealth of brilliant new elements that are now seen as essential to the series as Mario's flat cap and black moustache. *Super Mario Bros 3* incorporated sub-bosses, multiple routes and mini-games, while embracing the notions of secrets and level warping. In fact, the game is so great, millions of Americans stood in unity to create a large image of his head using colourful T-shirts. Visible from space, some say it was a warning to ET to never release another game on our planet.

Metroid

Released: 1986

Published by: Nintendo

Created by: in-house

By the same developer:

Super Metroid

07 Long before Ms Croft raided her first tomb there was another tough female playing a central role in an iconic franchise. Donning unflattering yellow armour and forced to wear a red spaceship on her head, you really couldn't tell whether Samus Aran was man, woman or beast. But one bash of the B button, sparking her elegant flip, gave us all the proof we needed. *Metroid* is a landmark NES title, the space shooter introduced password saves, non-linear levels and multiple endings. Its dark, menacing setting housed some truly freaky inhabitants, and the Giger-style levels reinforced the bleak, lonely atmosphere.

Contra

Released: 1988

Published by: Konami

Created by: in-house

By the same developer:

Metal Gear

08 It must be written into our genes that when visited by an alien it's customary to either destroy them or try to adopt them. Mario Bros on steroids, the homeport of Konami's arcade hit *Contra* is considered to be the finest run-and-gun on the NES. It tells the story of two marines who are assigned the mission of welcoming an alien species by unloading an ungodly amount of ammunition into their deformed domes. The game presents some inspired character and level designs, the most memorable being the breach of an alien base, which switched the perspective from a side-scrolling blaster to a Cabal-style shooting gallery.

Double Dragon 2 – The Revenge

Released: 1989

Published by: Technos

Created by: In-House

By the same developer:

Renegade

09 Taking on a darker tone than its predecessor, *Double Dragon 2* still follows the theme of the Lee brothers' ill luck with the opposite sex. After their abducted girlfriend, Marian, is callously killed by Shadow Warrior, the brothers are forced into action. It's widely considered to be the finest of the three *Double Dragon* games released on the NES, due to its intuitive controls. It also introduced a two-player co-op option and iconic moves like the Whirlwind Kick and the Hyper Uppercut – which looked a lot cooler than Billy and Jimmy's usual technique of pushing an enemy's head into their groin.

The Legend of Zelda

Released: 1987

Published by: Nintendo

Created by: in-house

By the same developer:

Sky Skipper

10 Sheathed inside a majestic gold cartridge, *The Legend of Zelda*'s tale of a nefarious villain, an ensnared princess and an elfin boy, bound together by unlikely heroism, was a chameleon of game genres that pioneered open-ended gameplay. Link's first quest not only popularised adventure games, it established pivotal precedents. It outmoded high-score tables by exposing a greater desire in gamers for exploration and completion, and created perhaps the most respected and well-loved series in gaming. It continues to be a touchstone of outstanding game design to this day.

MY LITTLE PONY

Information

Manufacturer: Hasbro
First Released: 1981
Expect to pay: £20
(Swan Boat Play Set)

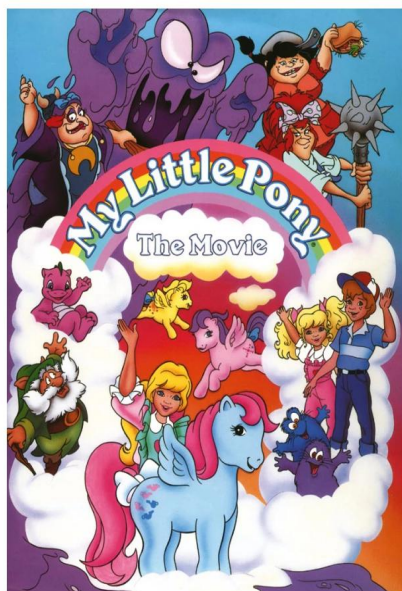
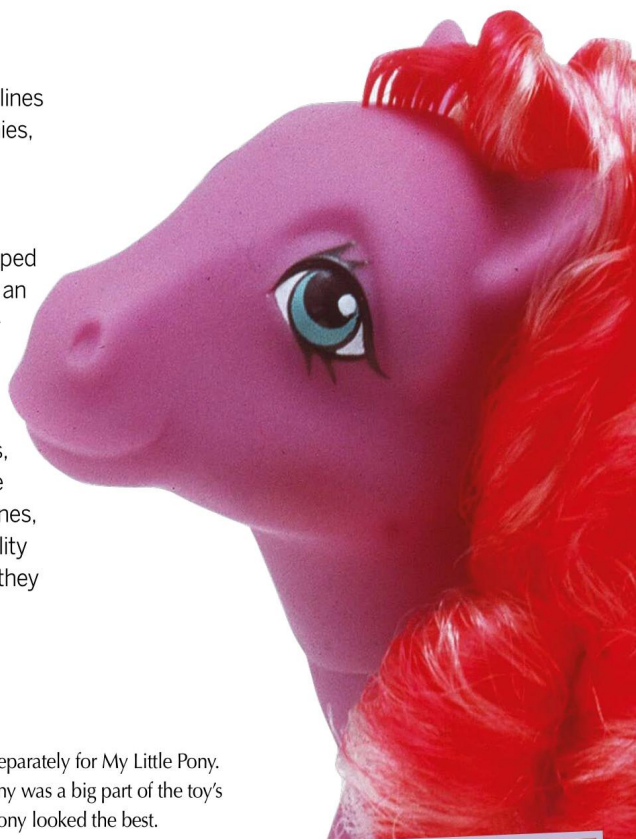
It all started with a pony figurine in 1981. Hasbro's new toy wasn't much to look at. Called My Pretty Pony, it was 10 inches tall, and could swish its shaggy tail and wink one eye. Yet it was the start of a cultural revolution for girls toys, when the initial success of My Pretty Pony paved the way for a smaller, revised My Little Pony to follow a year later.

My Little Pony appealed directly to the fanatical collector that lies dormant in us all. The ponies were small, so they could form a tidy collection on any girl's shelves, but most of all they all stood out thanks to their glorious colours and bushy manes. Each pony had a unique symbol stamped on its hind leg, and Hasbro quickly latched onto the

collector's appeal by launching different lines of My Little Pony figurines – So-Soft Ponies, Brush 'n' Grow Ponies, Twice-As-Fancy Ponies and more.

With My Little Pony well and truly embedded in every girl's life, it then galloped towards further domination in 1986 with an animated series (*My Little Pony*) and full-length film (*My Little Pony: The Movie*).

My Little Pony went from strength to strength, with more figurine lines, relaunches, and spreading out to comics, video games and conventions. But at the heart of it all are the My Little Pony figurines, which radiate as much warmth, personality and charm today as they did back when they first trotted onto toy-store shelves.



▼ You could buy brushes, combs, and hair picks separately for My Little Pony. Looking after the glorious mane on My Little Pony was a big part of the toy's appeal, as children wanted to make sure their pony looked the best.

The Legacy

Although the toys themselves are no longer as popular as they used to be, My Little Pony has lived on through TV series and films. More surprisingly, an adult fandom has proved so strong, it's led to several My Little Pony conventions being held around the world.



As the My Little Pony line continued to grow, fans began to learn the names of the more popular figures – Fluttershy, Honeycomb, Morning Glory, and so on. The cartoon helped make certain ponies even more popular.



The distinguishing mark for each pony could be found on its leg or its behind, and this is what made each pony stand out and become collectible.

One of the biggest changes that made My Little Pony a success is when the size dropped from 10 to 6 inches, as part of the rebrand from My Pretty Pony. That change helped make them even more collectible and their soaring popularity put an end to the My Pretty Pony line.



▲ Having the Cozy Coupe be foot, rather than pedal-powered, was a smart move on two levels. Not only did it make the car available to younger children, it also helped keep manufacturing costs down.

► Over the years, Little Tikes has attempted to capitalise on the success of the Cozy Coupe by expanding its range of vehicles to include pick-up trucks, convertibles and larger models. The original design remains timeless, though.





Cozy Coupe's enduring popularity and iconic design have earned it a place in Cleveland's Crawford Auto-Aviation Museum, where it sits proudly alongside the DeLorean, the Corvette, and the Model-T Ford.

The Legacy

Cozy Coupes are still on sale today, such as the Little Tikes 30th Anniversary Cozy Coupe. They have new features, such as a pretend ignition switch that turns and even a small boot to store toys in. But the basic design remains the same – Cozy Coupe is still a sturdy vehicle for children to run around in, causing mayhem indoors and outdoors.

Information

Manufacturer: Little Tikes
First Released: 1979
Expect to pay: £60

COZY COUPE

Everyone remembers their first car. The wheels spinning underneath you. The thrill of being in control of a hulking machine. The cool way of getting around, while those on foot gawk as you roll by. And that's just the experience you'll get from Cozy Coupe, which was the first car for many of us when we were younger.

The red and yellow vehicle was designed like a tiny Mini for one child to squeeze into, somewhat inevitable given it was created by a former car-parts designer for Chrysler. It had a fuel cap on the side, a single door that opened and a small seat inside. However, there was no engine to start or pedals to

turn. Without a motor of any kind, Cozy Coupe was powered by the driver's eager feet pushing along the ground through a small gap in the bottom of the car. Think of how the Flintstones used to drive but cuter.

What made Cozy Coupe so popular was how well built it was, making it the safest choice for parents who wanted to get a play vehicle for their children. It was sturdy and felt like it could survive a meteor crash, let alone the minor bumps and scrapes a child gets while driving at Cozy Coupe's low speeds. It proved so popular that in 1991, Cozy Coupe was the biggest-selling car in the United States!

▶ Dream Phone was designed to be played by two to four players, but forming teams was also a popular option. The winners would have to fight over their newfound crush themselves, however.



Different editions of Dream Phone came with their very own sets of hunks. So if you were playing in the UK, you'd be calling Bob and Charlie, whereas Carlos and Spencer were on the line in the US version.



▶ Aside from the various 'boy' cards, players could also use additional cards like 'Mum says hang up' to keep their opponents from winning the game.



DREAM PHONE

Information

Original Manufacturer Milton Bradley
First Released 1991
Expect to pay £25 (for an original set)

If you ever played Dream Phone, there was no forgetting it. The board game had the Dream Phone itself as the centrepiece, a giant bright pink phone in the middle of the table. The board was anchored around the phone, as was all the action.

But what was its purpose? The idea of the game is that one of 24 guys fancies you, and you need to find out who. Each player has photo cards with a guy on and his phone number. By calling each number on the Dream Phone, you'd get a clue as to who the guy is. Clues would range from useful ("He doesn't like pizza") to vague ("He looks cool in whatever he wears") to unhelpful ("I know who it is... but I'm not telling! Ha ha!").

Using the clues, you eliminate potential guys one-by-one until you're confident enough to guess who the actual guy who fancies you is. The guys themselves range from geeky nerds to blond-haired jocks, who all have distinguishing features such as playing baseball or listening to music or eating popcorn. This makes it easier for the player to eliminate them.

Even though Dream Phone seemed like a throwaway concept for a game, it actually required brainwork to narrow down the list of guys, making it surprisingly challenging. The Dream Phone itself also meant that there was some impressive technology at the heart of it all, making for a talking point (of course) for those playing it.

The Legacy

Dream Phone was released around the same time as Guess Who, another board game by Milton Bradley. It was the latter that would go on to having a lasting impact, thanks to its broader appeal (Dream Phone was quite clearly targeted at girls). Even so, you can buy a modern, updated version of Dream Phone, which still uses a phone as its centrepiece – albeit not a bright pink one any more!

SPEAK & SPELL

Information

Original Manufacturer: Texas Instruments

First Released: 1978

Expect to pay: £299.99 (for original model)

Is it too dramatic to call Speak & Spell the iPad of the Seventies? Almost certainly, but there's no denying that the two have at least one thing in common. Using a Speak & Spell felt as though you were holding and playing with cutting-edge technology, even if Speak & Spell was very much a toy.

Speak & Spell was actually an educational toy, and even though child logic often dictated that education isn't fun, this bright orange device overcame the label by dazzling

users with its tech. It was designed to help children pronounce and spell words correctly – hence 'Speak & Spell' – and it was the wonder of hearing the device actually *speak* rather than play back a pre-recorded voice that ensured it didn't feel dull or boring. It made young minds wonder what sort of technological sorcery was taking place under the bright casing, and its spell-binding magic is what earned it a place in Eighties legend.

What helped was that Speak & Spell had lots of word games, too. The basic unit had

Mystery Word, Secret Code, and Letter. Additional cartridge expansions, in what would serve as a sort of precursor to things to come with handheld consoles like the Game Boy, contained further games such as A.C.E. and Race. At the height of its popularity, Speak & Spell wasn't just helping to educate children – it even enabled a certain alien to phone home in Steven Spielberg's film *E.T.*



Speak & Spell was actually part of a three-toy launch. Texas Instruments also launched Speak & Read and Speak & Math alongside it, although they never reached the same heights that Speak & Spell did.



The synthesized speech is so popular that it has actually crossed over into music. It has been sampled by bands like Coldplay, Limp Bizkit and TLC, while Depeche Mode's *Speak & Spell* album was named after the device.

The Legacy

While Speak & Spell helped influence the educational development of many young lives, its lasting impact was in the technology used. By synthesizing a spoken word rather than playing back a voice recording, Speak & Spell paved the way for technology used in devices today such as Siri. Online emulators mean Speak & Spell fans can easily relive memories on their desktops, rather than hunting down an original model through eBay.

Speak & Spell was created when Texas Instruments began work on speech synthesis, with its \$25,000 research into the area eventually leading to the creation of the educational toy. It was the first educational toy to use speech that wasn't pre-recorded on tape.

HELLO.

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS



One of the features that helped Speak & Spell endure was its compatibility with 'expansion modules', cartridges that could be purchased separately that added new words and games. These could be inserted through the battery slot.

© TI 1978
Speak & Spell™



© Shutterstock/Alamy

Information

Original Manufacturer Hasbro

First Released 1972

Expect to pay £9.99



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Boggle has made a big enough impact in popular culture that it has popped up in some surprising places. It's referenced in *Friends*, *The Simpsons*, and *King of the Hill*.



One of the skills in Boggle is that you have to read letters which will fall into the tray upside down or to the side. It sounds easier than it is – it's all too easy to panic and confuse an M for an upside-down W, for example.

BOGGLE

Crashing, rattling, and clattering. It was a distinctive din that any Boggle-owning household would instantly recognise. It is, of course, the sound of lettered Boggle cubes being shaken around in the game's plastic shell. The cubes then fall into the 4 × 4 tray at the base of the shell, before the timer is turned and Boggle begins, as players race to find the highest-scoring word among the mess of letters.

A big part of Boggle's appeal is how easy it is to play. The rules are simple. When the timer is up, all players compare the words they have found. Any words that appear on multiple lists are eliminated, with players earning points for words that only they have found, scoring the number of letters in each

Then there's the design of Boggle itself. The bold, punchy font of its lettering is almost as distinct as the sound of the rattling cubes denoting a new game that's about to start.

It's testament to the strength of Allan Turoff's original design that Boggle has remained the same game that hit the shelves back in 1972. The letter distribution is tweaked slightly from region to region, but otherwise there's little to tell the editions apart and there's been no evolution or redesign to the game itself. In fact, the only real difference has been that modern versions of the game are now designed with a shell and cubes that don't make quite as much noise when rattled – although it is up for debate whether losing out on the trademark noise is a good thing or not.

The Legacy

Somewhat inevitably, the popularity of *Boggle* led to bigger versions of the same game being made. Big Boggle featured a 5 × 5 tray (with extra rules, such as three-letter words not being allowed) with Super Big Boggle following, with a 6 × 6 tray. Yet Boggle's lasting appeal is best measured by mobile phone app Ruzzle, which was inspired by the classic word game. Ruzzle topped the iPhone charts in 2013 and has been downloaded over 10 million times on Android.

The white, orange and black colour scheme is as big a part of Boggle, as is the distinctive font size. Despite some variants such as blue, the original colour scheme has always endured since the game was first created.



A small plastic shell fits over this tray and each game begins by shaking the cubes about. The shell is clear, so you can see if the cubes have fallen into the tray.

SUPER SOAKER

Information

Manufacturer Larami/Hasbro

First Released 1990

Expect to pay £20-50 used,
\$100-200 new in box

In the early 1990s, two words were absolutely synonymous with dripping popsicles, playing outside until the sun set, and those wonderfully schoolless summer months: Super Soaker. Created by prolific patent-holder and NASA scientist Lonnie Johnson in his basement during spare evening hours in 1982, this soon-to-be revolution in water-gun culture was, believe it or not, born out of Johnson's attempts at creating a new kind of heat-pump technology for refrigerators and air-conditioning units. He shopped around the humble prototype – a hodgepodge built out of a two-litre soda bottle, Plexiglas and PVC pipe

– for several years, until finally catching a break with promising toy company Larami.

When it officially launched in 1990, the Super Soaker line didn't bare the now-recognisable (and totally radical) moniker, but instead the less-appealing Power Drencher label. However, poor sales and a name conflict with another inventor led to a full rebranding and relaunch in 1991. This, coupled with a memorable TV ad campaign that had young boys crashing a pool party with cool shades and pump-action pressurised water, resulted in more than two million Super Soakers being sold that year alone.

It turns out that – and to borrow language from a Super Soaker marketing slogan – wetter is indeed better. Whether it was the line's signature neon colours or the strong, reliable H₂O tech, the water was certainly on the wall: Johnson's new outdoor play device was a massive hit. And, more importantly, it left water balloon fights and traditional squirt gun battles in the proverbial dust.



Some of the first Super Soaker water guns released were the SS30 (orange and yellow), the SS100 (blue and yellow) and the bestselling SS50 (yellow and green), which every kid in existence seemed to own. It was this last model that earned Super Soaker an official nomination for the National Toy Hall of Fame.

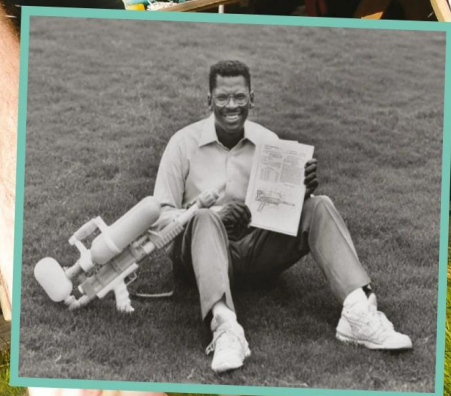
The Legacy

Super Soaker became such a ubiquitous cultural phenomenon in the 1990s that the brand name itself, similar to product mainstays like Kleenex or Band-Aid, became a way in which to refer to virtually any kind of pressurised or pump-action water gun. Even today, Hasbro is still (pun fully intended) pumping out fresh Super Soaker toys under its wide Nerf umbrella. While the name doesn't carry nearly the same retail clout it did decades ago, new generations are still passing forwards the drenched torch.

Even celebrities fell under the Super Soaker spell. Johnny Carson was seen brandishing one of the neon water weapons on The Tonight Show in 1992, and Michael Jackson had a well-known obsession with the high-powered squirt guns, often hosting all-out water wars at his Neverland Ranch estate.



With the introduction of Larami's CPS (Constant Pressure System) in 1996 came the infamous CPS 2000, a revered model that arguably remains the most powerful stock water gun to ever hit store shelves. It even came with its own health and safety warning!



When Lonnie Johnson pitched Super Soaker to Larami in 1989, he closed the landmark deal in a fashion that only an inventor could – by using pressurised water to knock paper cups off a table from across the conference room. What toy company president could resist such salesmanship?

Information

Original Manufacturer Ideal Games/Hasbro Games
First Released 1963
Expect to pay £10-20

▶ The design of the machine itself was based on Rube Goldberg's famous drawings. The original designer of the game admitted he was inspired by Goldberg's designs, but didn't pay licensing fees or royalties to him.

▶ The mousetrap was purposefully complex, as it wasn't meant to trap the mouse every time it was set off. There were several points at which the trap could fail, such as the marble going off-track or parts of the trap not triggering.

The Legacy

The game design remained largely unchanged for 20 years following the tweaks made in 1984. In the early 2000s, though, the game was redesigned in the UK with three new traps for players to avoid. Online reviews of the new game have been predominantly negative, with many referring to the older version of the game and how much has been changed. The game was also redesigned in the US with 'Elefun & Friends' branding, with a design that, while different, incorporates many of the original game's design ideas.



MOUSE TRAP

▲ The original Mouse Trap was more like a toy than a board game. It was in the Eighties that a redesign added a competitive side and some more complex ideas, such as cheeses you could earn and then spend on trying to trap opponents.

Few games are more memorable for kids than Mouse Trap. Games like Monopoly are unforgettable because of the family-breaking arguments they caused, but it's games like Mouse Trap that will get any kid's eyes to light up.

In case you somehow haven't heard of it, the premise was that you had to use your turn to move around the board, building up the mousetrap to capture your opponents. The mousetrap itself was far more complex than a simple spring and wire, though – it involved marbles, bath-tubs and diving boards, and culminated in a trap descending on the unfortunate mouse below.

The original game, however, was far less fun. Originally designed in 1963, Mouse Trap didn't even include a dice at first. The

game was more of an interactive toy than a competition. As a result, it was fun to play with a few times, but didn't offer any real reason to come back again and again.

Thankfully, the game was redesigned in 1984 and re-released by Milton Bradley. The new game included cheese, new spaces on the board, and the option to trade in your cheeses in order to try to trap your friends. The game soon became a phenomenon, and the new, more competitive title was soon a family favourite.

The game is, of course, based on the ideas of Rube Goldberg and his famously complex contraptions. More recent, redesigned versions of the game still don't really compare to the earlier layout – the Eighties version really was the best.

DANGER MOUSE

Information

Manufacturer:
Thames Television
First Released: 1981

No cartoon captured the spirit of being British quite like *Danger Mouse* did. Based on native spy fiction such as *Danger Man* and *James Bond*, the show centred around Danger Mouse himself, "the world's greatest secret agent." Armed with the secret martial art of kung moggy, 34 languages and an iconic eye-patch, Danger Mouse teamed up with his bumbling sidekick Penfold to put a stop to the evil schemes of his wheezy toad nemesis Baron Silas Greenback.

Danger Mouse was voiced by David Jason, who rose to fame in comedy *Open All Hours* and had just started a starring role in *Only Fools and Horses*. Jason's comedy talent enabled him to give Danger Mouse a cheeky persona, as the hero needed to deliver witty

one-liners with as much confidence as he'd deal with Greenback's many traps and tricks. *Danger Mouse* was also a lavish production, despite only being ten minutes long – one episode featured over 2,000 drawings.

But it was the British humour that really shone through: the endless puns, the stiff upper-lip and the cries of "oh heck!" and "oh fiddle!" from Penfold. In fact, *Danger Mouse* had such a strong British streak of humour that it appealed to Americans who were fascinated by the jokes, quick wit and references such as a red postbox serving as Danger Mouse's HQ. It became the first British cartoon to appear on US TV channel Nickelodeon and at its peak, *Danger Mouse* hit 21 million viewers – one of the biggest success stories of the Eighties.

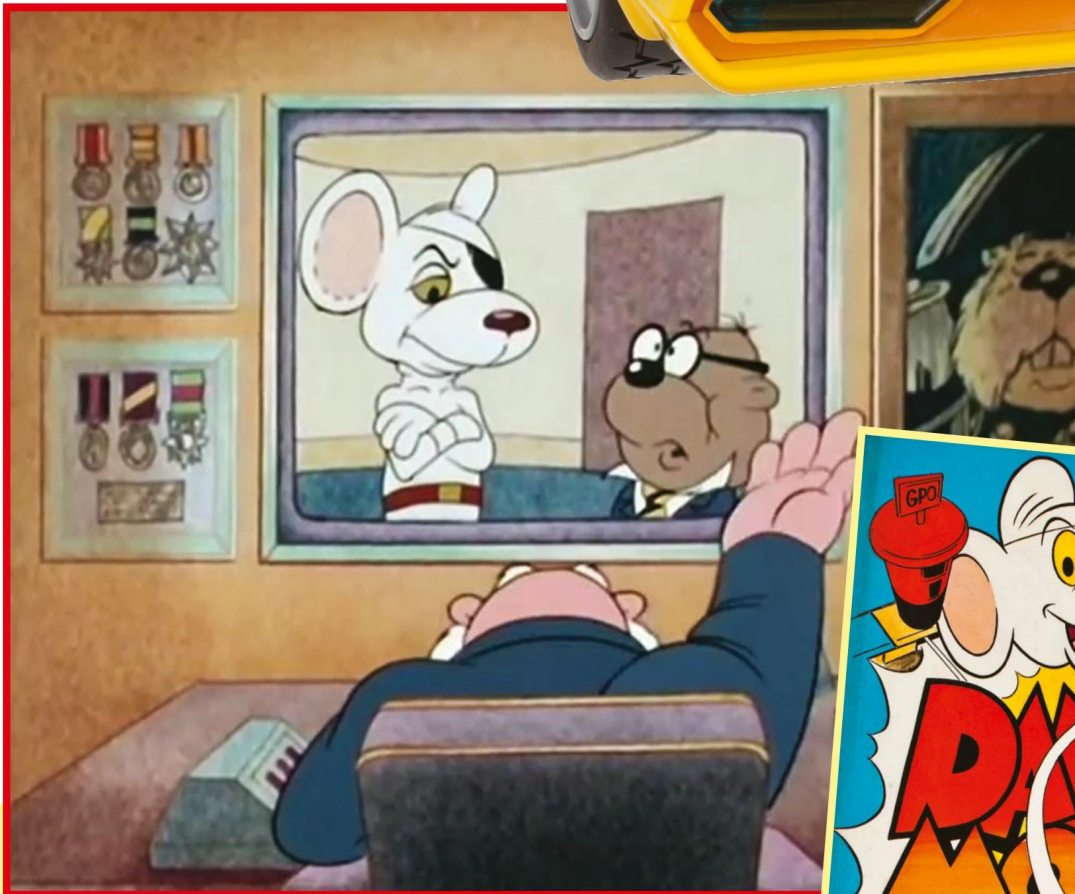


The Legacy

Danger Mouse villain Count Duckula earned his own spin-off cartoon, which ran for four seasons. But Danger Mouse himself returned in 2015 for a reboot, which brought in the likes of comedian Stephen Fry and *Pointless* host Alexander Armstrong as voices. It became the highest-rated show on CBBC within three weeks of airing, pulling in 2.4 million viewers, and has been commissioned for a second series.



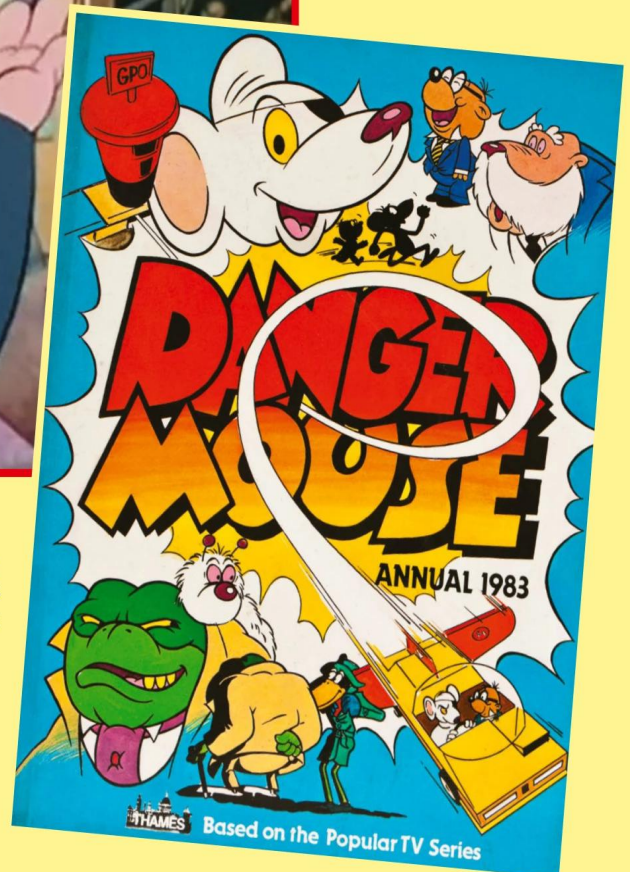
Danger Mouse took place in Baker Street, the same setting for the famous Sherlock Holmes novels.



Danger Mouse's assistant is Penfold, who is a hamster, even though he was often assumed by fans of the show to be a mole. He's a somewhat cowardly figure next to Danger Mouse and is sometimes called 'Jig Saw' because he goes to pieces when trouble arises.

Danger Mouse's boss is Colonel K, who appears at the beginning of episodes to give the duo their mission, and again at the end to debrief them. The exceptions are when the episodes are based on Colonel K getting into trouble, such as when he gets kidnapped.

One of the biggest secrets about Danger Mouse is how he lost his eye, or even if he lost it at all. It's never revealed throughout the series what actually happened, leaving viewers to ponder the mystery for themselves.



HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE



It began life as a potential rival to G.I. Joe, and became a global phenomenon thanks to a cartoon based on the adventures of its titular star. Find out more about the most powerful toys in the universe — we have the power!

While many remember the cartoon most fondly, it was with a successful range of action figures that He-Man and his realm were first unleashed upon the world.

Having passed on the opportunity to create toys based upon a small science-fiction adventure called Star Wars, Mattel's thoughts turned to how it could introduce a new range to compete with Kenner (Star Wars) and Hasbro (G.I. Joe). Mattel already had the female market cornered thanks to Barbie — what about the young boys' market too? It was an ongoing theme at the firm, which had already tried and failed to battle the all-conquering G.I. Joe with Big Jim, a clean-cut sports hero.

Like Joe and Jim, male action figures were traditionally lean and toned rather than ultra-powerful and muscular. Then, in the summer of 1980, when Mattel acquired the rights to the imminent Arnold Schwarzenegger movie Conan the Barbarian, Mattel designer Roger Sweet had a light-bulb moment. The movie option was quickly dropped due its violence, but combined with his discovery of the amazing art of Frank Frazetta, Sweet was inspired to devise the succinct tag line 'barbarian monster fantasy' for a potential series of action figures. The designer set to work making the test models, including the idea of additional armour and other accessories, a pivoting waist and an oversized, hyper-muscular body. Three



different figures were readied for display to the Mattel marketing team: a space warrior, contemporary soldier and the barbarian, all boasting the exaggerated Schwarzeneggeresque physique and a slightly crouched, ready-for-battle pose. The final piece was the name. In a flash of inspiration, Roger Sweet came up with the perfect punchy blend of machismo and raw sinewy power: He-Man.

The day of the big pitch involved several proposals from Sweet's rivals in the design department. Front and centre at the meeting was Mattel president Ray Wagner, who had turned down Star Wars several years earlier. After Sweet made his pitch, Wagner pointed at the He-Man figures and uttered the immortal – and possibly apocryphal – line: "Those have the power." He-Man was go.

GOING GLOBAL

Having had the nod from Mattel's bigwigs, Sweet and his colleagues began designing the starter set and accompanying figures that would form the debut line of releases of the Masters of the Universe. Despite the go-ahead, it was still a big risk for the toy company: He-Man was an unlicensed, unknown property that would hit the market with no instant brand recognition.

1982 was the year which finally saw the over-muscled hero and his ilk revealed to the world. Included in this first wave were heroic characters such as Man-At-

Arms, Stratos, Teela and, of course, He-Man himself. Up against them were a small selection of evil warriors: Mer-Man, Beast Man and the cackling Skeletor. The land of



Eternia was represented by the main playset, Castle Grayskull itself, while He-Man could be purchased in a gift set alongside his flying Wind Raider or the powerful Battle Cat. Mattel focused this first year on the barbarian monster element of He-Man, with its creator's idea of combining this theme with a science-fiction twist put on hold.

According to Sweet, Mattel marketing put its first-year estimate for He-Man at around \$7 million. After favourable reaction from the toy industry, this figure was hastily revised.

Respectable sales figures of almost \$40 million in the Masters of the Universe's debut year were enough to propel it into further production. After doubling that amount a year later, and then topping \$100 million in 1984, He-Man became a hit both domestically and worldwide. reason was undoubtedly the



"Parents approved of the way no one was ever obviously hurt, and also the strong moral message"

He-Man

With his over-ripened muscles and shock of blond, wavy hair, there's no mistaking the heroic lead character of the Masters of the Universe. Sporting the removable equipment and spring-loaded waist which would become a recurring feature of the toy-line, He-Man is not just a beefcake figure, but also an instantly recognisable worldwide phenomenon that has firmly entered popular culture, along with his arch-enemy, Skeletor. Designer Roger Sweet realised simplicity was the key and, as such, He-Man and his kin could be shoehorned into all manner of styles. Later versions of the figure include laser power He-Man (complete with yellow laser sword) and Thunder Punch He-Man, with a backpack that contains a slot for a blasting cap.



Castle Grayskull

The first and most iconic playset of the MOTU toy-line, Castle Grayskull was a must for any kid wanting to recreate the battles of the cartoon. It includes a trap door, laser cannon and elevator, and promises hours of fun once coupled with figures, available separately. See also the Snake Mountain and Towers Of Eternia playsets.

Universe boxes and cards owes a significant debt to the work of genius fantasy artist Frank Frazetta, and of course, that ancient barbarian hero, Conan. And like these works, the timeless nature of these themes has ensured the appeal of He-Man has not meaningfully dwindled over the past 30 years.

Today, the appeal of collecting He-Man and MOTU merchandising comes from several different sources. Simple nostalgia is a major factor, as many collectors try to recapture their childhood through the toys they played with 30 years ago. The figures and playsets are also either iconic (such as He-Man himself and the villainous Skeletor), or inventive, whether it be the multifaceted Man-E-Faces, the glow-in-the-dark Scare Glow or the spring-loaded human battering ram, Ram Man. Other factors include the sheer wealth and variety of figures, and the unusual blend of the primitive, magical barbarian theme with the sci-fi overtones of latter waves, a trick Mattel would try to repeat with the rather less successful cowboy/sci-fi mash-up, Bravestarr. Finally, like many retro toys, collectors buy for investment, and in this context, condition is key. Wave one figures and playsets, if in good order and boxed, can fetch sky-high prices on auction sites.

Whatever your reason for starting a MOTU collection, there's a wealth of He-Man related merchandising out there, just waiting for you. And discovering the variety of Masters of the Universe-themed items is all part of the fun.

Special thanks to Matt Williams (@matt_williams86) and Michael Anderson (@motumatters) for images.

Skeletor

He-Man's nemesis has been seen in several different guises since the first wave. This original figure is the most recognisable from the cartoon series, and includes a battle staff, sword, belt and harness. For anyone looking to emulate those Eternia battles of old, a Skeletor figure is a necessity. Maybe you can even – gulp – let him win every now and then?



SCARE GLOW

A malevolent spirit summoned by Skeletor, reanimated as a ghostly, glow-in-the-dark figure complete with a verdant halberd (named his Scythe Of Doom) and removable cape. Due to its devilish appearance, Scare Glow is a favourite character of many fans, and one of the more unusual and imaginative MOTU figures to collect.

cartoon adaptation, entitled *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*.

Not long after the toy-line had been released, Mattel penned a deal with animation company Filmation to create a cartoon based around He-Man. The result would distort the edge between children's entertainment and advertising; the programme essentially served as a 30-minute commercial for Mattel's products. And it did its job admirably too, shooting He-Man into the public consciousness, and making it the must-have toy around the world. The show's popularity with parents was a key factor: they usually approved of the way no one was ever obviously hurt, and also the strong moral message conveyed by one of the good characters at the conclusion of each episode. This no doubt aided He-Man when it came to birthday and Christmas present buying.

COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

Masters of the Universe is one of those rare examples of a children's show and toy that breached its original target audience and conquered the general public consciousness. Propelled by the moralising cartoon that mixed a stirring theme tune with a memorable tagline that could easily be repeated in school playgrounds around the world, the fame of He-Man long outlived the original Mattel toy-line which peaked in popularity around 1986. Despite attempts to revive the toy since, recent waves have been aimed firmly at nostalgic collectors, such as the 2000 commemorative reissue of the original line, together with analogous back cards. Looking back at He-Man's origins, it's clear much of this remarkable artwork on the Masters of the



TEDDY RUXPIN

As a parent, imagine if there was a toy that somehow combined cooking with the children playing football, or vacuuming with hide and seek. That was the unique appeal of Teddy Ruxpin, one of the most popular toys in the Eighties. Not only was it a brilliant toy, it also gave mums and dads the chance to relax, as it combined fun with parent duty.

The idea was simple enough. Teddy Ruxpin was a cute teddy bear with a cassette deck built into his back. Different Teddy Ruxpin cassettes contained different stories about Teddy and his adventures with his best friends Grubby and Newton Gimmick. Load him up with a cassette and Teddy Ruxpin would move his eyes and mouth in sync with the story as it was read out loud.

From the children's point of view, they didn't see a toy that gave parents the night off. They just saw a cuddly and adorable teddy bear, reading them imaginative stories about chasing treasure and keeping them company. With its dual appeal to both parents and children, Teddy Ruxpin became the bestselling toy of both 1985 and 1986.

But moving parts weren't the only way Teddy Ruxpin came to life. The teddy bear took centre stage in his own cartoon, *The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin*, which used the same stories and voice actors from the cassettes. It proved every bit as popular as the actual Teddy Ruxpin doll – mention his name nowadays and you'll see just as many older eyes light up because of their memories of the cartoon.



Information

Manufacturer: Worlds of Wonder

First Released: 1985

Current Manufacturer: Backpack Toys

Expect to pay: £45 (Second-hand models only)

The famous version of Teddy Ruxpin used a cassette for stories, which were loaded into the bear's back.

But as technology progressed, the cassette was replaced with a digital cartridge.

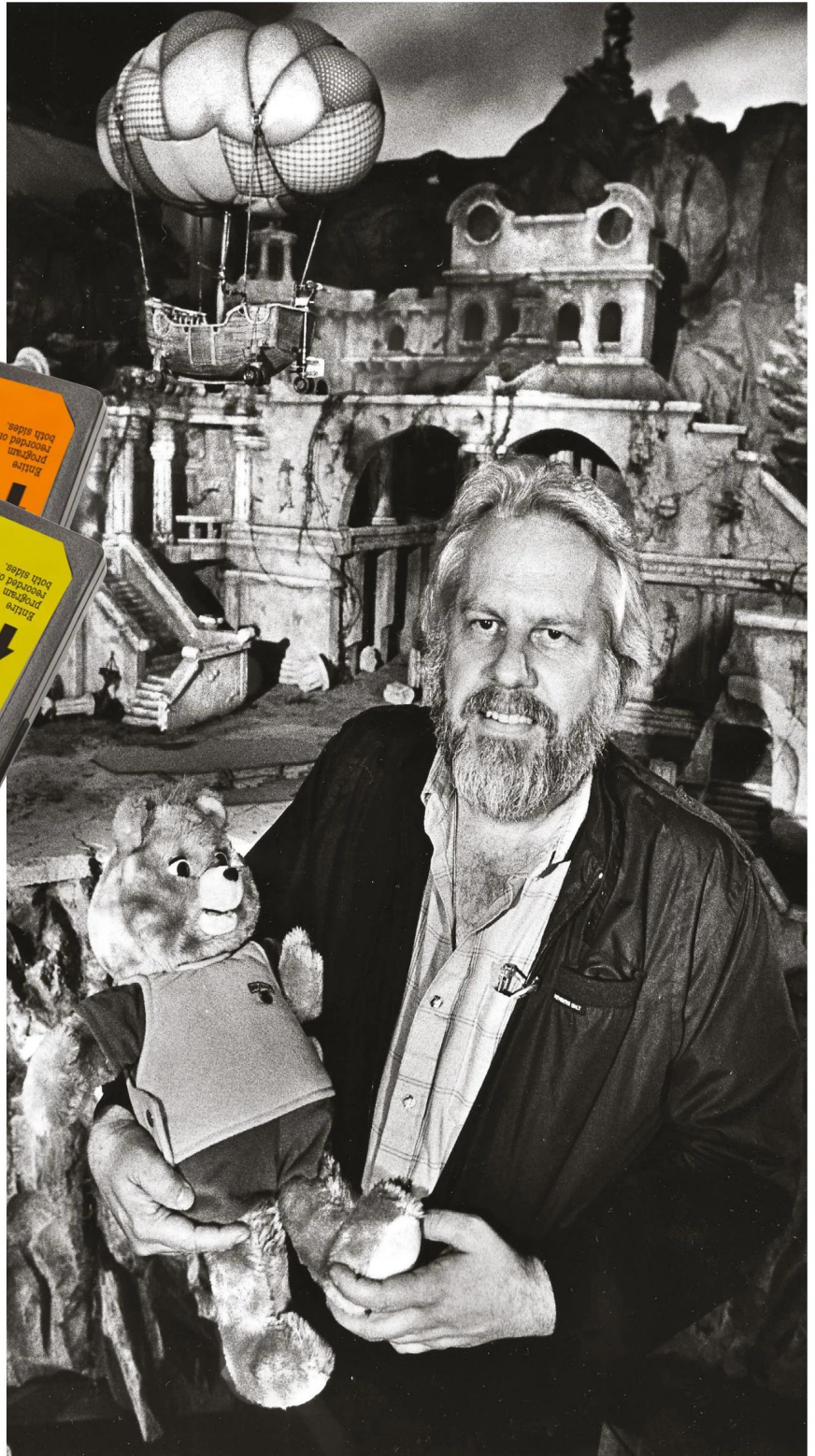


At the height of Teddy Ruxpin's success, Worlds of Wonder developed a workout tape and book called *Teddy's Workout*. This saw children helping Teddy exercise by moving his arms and legs; however, because of liability and insurance issues, it was never released.

Unsurprisingly given the doll's popularity, there was briefly a market for unofficial Teddy Ruxpin cassette tapes. Worlds of Wonder were having none of it, however, and successful lawsuits put an end to the knock-off tapes.

The Legacy

Teddy Ruxpin has experienced mixed fortunes since its explosive debut in the Eighties. Its original manufacturers, Worlds of Wonder, went bust in 1990, leading to a succession of companies trying to relaunch Teddy Ruxpin but failing to recreate its debut success. Backpack Toys will launch a new line of Teddy Ruxpin toys this year, with technology that puts the original to shame – the 2017 version has an internal hard drive, 40 facial expressions and an accompanying smartphone app.



MASTER SYSTEM

Sega may not compete in the home-console arena any more, but its Master System arguably played a significant role in introducing many gamers to the concept of the 'home arcade'

The Sega Master System is something of an enigma. One of the most powerful home consoles of its time, the machine is barely worthy of a footnote when it comes to deconstructing the history of the American and Japanese gaming industries. It sank almost without trace in these two key territories, failing to make even a dent in the seemingly impregnable armour of Nintendo's NES (or Famicom). However, in other parts of the world – most notably Europe and South America – it was a tremendous success, winning hordes of fans and establishing Sega's reputation as a first-rate purveyor of arcade smash hits in the process.

Founded in 1940, Sega (an abbreviation of 'SErvice GAMES') initially gained renown for its unique brand of automated coin-operated arcade games. Having plenty of experience in the field of amusements, the company was perfectly poised to compete when 'true' arcade titles like *Pong* and *Space Invaders* started to appear. Thanks to successful games like *Future Spy* and *Zaxxon*, Sega soon garnered a reputation as something of an expert when it came to arcade thrills and spills.

As the Eighties began to unfold, the videogame industry seemed unstoppable. Encouraged by the sterling performance of its coin-op division, and the sheer amount of money American company Atari seemed to be making from the VCS/2600, Sega decided to

enter the home entertainment arena. Released in 1983, the SG-1000 was Sega's first attempt at cracking the console market. However, it was not the triumph the company had hoped for. To make matters significantly worse Atari managed to successfully flush the US home videogame market down the toilet in the same year, causing the first worldwide videogame crash. Sega's assets were hit badly in the ensuing fallout, but salvation came from American David Rosen (who had previous ties with Sega) and Japanese businessman Hayao Nakayama. These two men stopped the firm from collapsing into the gaping hole created by Atari's poor management.

After a period of stabilisation, Sega was purchased in 1984 by Japanese corporation CSK and subtly re-christened

'Sega Enterprises'. Despite the abject failure of the SG-1000, plans were made for a successor in the shape of the updated SG-1000 'Mark II'. Sega, like fellow Japanese company Nintendo, knew that although the crash of 1983 had damaged confidence in the videogame industry, it had created a void that simply begged to be filled – in Japan at least. The Mark II struggled to shift units at retail, but this hardware would eventually evolve into 1985's SG-1000 'Mark III' – bar a few technical differences this was the Master System in all but name. It was around this time that Sega's rivalry with Nintendo – which would later bloom into a full-scale war when the Mega Drive and SNES



SYSTEM/Power Base



Information

Year released: Japan, 1985,
UK: 1987

Original price: Japan: 16800 Yen,
US: \$200, UK: £99.99

Expect to pay: £20+

arrived on the scene – became apparent. Sega's machine was more powerful than Nintendo's, but when the Mark III and Famicom went head-to-head in Japan the former was given a rather humiliating beating by the latter. Nintendo's popular console trounced Sega's technically superior hardware thanks to a wealth of third-party support. Developers were infamously forced to agree that they would not publish their NES titles on rival hardware, which left Sega in a rather tight predicament – it could only rely on its own home-grown arcade titles for so long. The solution was to obtain the rights to 're-program' the games of other developers (a process that PC-Engine creator NEC

also indulged in, ironically converting many of Sega's key arcade hits to its own 8-bit format), but even this strategy wasn't perfect – many of the licensed titles were distinctly lacklustre when compared to the 'cream of the crop' that the NES enjoyed.

Undeterred by the underwhelming performance of the Mark III on home soil, Sega decided to release the hardware in the US, where it was radically re-styled and rebranded as the impressive-sounding 'Master System'. Released in 1986 (a year after Nintendo performed the same trick with the Famicom, which became the big loveable slab of grey plastic known as





Towards the end of its life the Master System played host to some ambitious conversions – some far more successful than others.

the NES), the Master System found itself in a similar predicament to the one experienced in Japan. Nintendo had spent the previous year busily promoting its new console and had snapped up key developer support from Capcom, Konami and Taito. Again, Nintendo requested that developers keep their games 'NES exclusive', and given the unassailable position the console enjoyed, few had the

foregone conclusion. Despite Tonka taking over the distribution duties, the Master System continued to perform poorly and was all but ignored by American gamers.

A rather pointless Japanese release of the Master System hardware followed in 1987, with the console being treated with the same level of disdain as its predecessor – unsurprising when you consider it was

saw the opportunity and pounced. Aably distributed by UK company Mastertronic (previously famous for releasing budget games for the 8-bit home micros), the European variant of the Master System was unleashed in time for Christmas 1987. Spurred on by adverts that promoted the console as 'an arcade in the home', and supported by a range of killer coin-op classics such as *Hang On*, *OutRun*, *After Burner* and *Space Harrier*, the Master System quickly mopped up the market share Nintendo had been too slovenly to secure. Gamers weaned on the Spectrum and C64 suddenly saw the attraction of owning a home console – rather than playing bumbling, half-arsed conversions of their favourite arcade hits by Western companies only concerned with cashing in on popular titles, fans could indulge in highly accurate ports produced by Sega itself. "The Master System raised the bar in terms of arcade-style home gaming," explains Neil West, former editor of *Sega Power* magazine. "The hardware was a leap forward from the home computer systems we'd all been used to." It was with the Master System that many UK gamers experienced instantaneous loading – an astonishing revelation after years of waiting for tapes to load on the home computers.

Such was the success of the machine that Mastertronic soon found that the Master System was accounting for nearly

"Any other company would have capitulated in the face of such a dismal performance, but Sega wasn't about to give up without a fight"

will to defy this request. Despite possessing technically superior hardware, Sega had, unfortunately, come to the party too late, with the Master System also crippled by a meagre software library. Compared to the multitude of third-party developers that supported the NES, Sega was only able to call upon the allegiance of two in the US: Activision and Parker Brothers.

By 1988, Sega's Japanese overlords had decided that enough was enough. Keen to offload the under-performing console, the questionable decision was made to sell the US distribution rights to toy firm Tonka. While the company was the indisputable king of the bright yellow plastic digger, it, sadly, had no experience whatsoever of effectively selling a cutting-edge electronic entertainment system. Tonka immediately made some puzzling choices regarding software choices and vetoed the localisation of several key titles (many of which were selling like hot cakes elsewhere in the world). Compared to the stunning collection of software available on the NES, the result was something of a

effectively the same machine that had been released to general apathy in 1985. It was eventually discontinued in Japan two years later. Any other company would have capitulated in the face of such a dismal performance, but Sega wasn't about to give up without a fight. Carefully scanning the globe for possible conquest, the stubby finger of fate fell on Europe – the one region where Nintendo's influence had yet to be felt. Nintendo had released the NES in Europe towards the end of 1986, but poor promotion coupled with a lofty price point meant that the market penetration enjoyed by the machine was decidedly unimpressive. Sega

Game Gear

Released to compete with the Game Boy, it was essentially a portable Master System. Many of the games were ports of home titles and the machine was even able to play Master System carts thanks to the 'Master Gear' converter. The Game Gear was battery hungry and suffered from a blurry screen – two factors that resulted in its downfall.



MASTER SYSTEM

its entire yearly turnover. Such spectacular performance attracted the attention of Richard Branson's Virgin, who eventually acquired the firm (which was renamed Virgin Mastertronic) and, therefore, the European distribution rights to Sega's hardware and software. It was a timely intervention and a shrewd business move as the Master System's successor was on the horizon and it would prove to be even more successful.

When the Mega Drive/Genesis was released, it spelt the end for the Master System in the US and Japan, despite a remodelled alternative appearing in the shape of the Master System II. Sega reacquired the US distribution rights for its products, from Tonka, and set about promoting the new-look Master System, possibly in the hope that the frenzied public interest in the 16-bit Genesis would somehow trickle down to its 8-bit stable mate. Sadly, it wasn't to be, and the final game to be published in the US was *Sonic The Hedgehog*.

in 1991. Compare this to Europe, where the Master System II was a big success and helped the format cling on to its significant market share. As the Mega Drive started to gather momentum, Sega Europe wisely kept the 8-bit console ticking over with a drip-feed of quality titles like *Streets Of Rage II*, *Mercs* and *Sonic 2*. Support finally died away in the mid-Nineties. Another market where the Master System enjoyed almost unchallenged success was Brazil. Traditionally a region where console technology trails that of the US, Europe and Japan, the machine was released in 1989, but remained wildly popular well into the following decade, marketed with impressive skill by Tec Toy. The company even went as far as to release a wireless variant of the Master System hardware, dubbed 'The Compact'. When you consider this rather sketchy history, which saw the Master System fail catastrophically in two of the three key worldwide markets, it begs the question: is the console really

worthy of a reassessment? The answer is simple. Without this criminally undervalued machine, Sega would not have enjoyed the considerable success that it subsequently had with the Mega Drive. The Master System allowed Sega to experiment with arcade conversions, original IP and even create a mascot in the form of the loveable monkey-boy Alex Kidd. Without the Master System we also wouldn't have Phantasy Star – one of Sega's most well-known and best-loved franchises. Developers like Yuji Naka and Naoto Oshima cut their teeth on Sega's 8-bit hardware. Although it couldn't boast the sheer volume of classic titles possessed by Nintendo's NES, the Master System is still worthy of praise. Those gamers willing to stick with their machines back in the late-Eighties were treated to a commendable selection of games including *Wonderboy III: The Dragon's Trap*, *Psycho Fox*, *Power Strike* (aka *Aleste*), *Golvellius*, *Phantasy Star* and many, many others.

The fact that Sega was so dominant in the coin-op arena also meant that the machine played host to some commendable ports, as Neil West reveals, “The console came at a time when Sega enjoyed huge influence and power in the coin-op world, which meant a lot of games were available for conversion.” Although it could be argued that the promise of ‘an arcade in the home’ wasn’t fulfilled until the advent of the Mega Drive, the Master System nevertheless created a solid foundation to build on and gave gamers an insight into the fascinating world of Sega. This was a company that in the proceeding years would scale the heights of the world videogame industry, only to fall from grace in spectacular fashion almost as rapidly. In that respect, the Master System serves as a remarkable historical piece – with this much-maligned console, Sega tentatively tested the waters it would ultimately flounder in.



PERFECT TEN GAMES

It was home to the ugliest game cartridges, was cased in the most god-awful package design that you could imagine, but boasted some cracking games nonetheless. Don't believe us? Then why not take a look at the ten Master System games that we can't possibly be without



01



02



03



04

Psycho Fox

Released: 1989

Published by: SEGA

Created by: Vic Tokai

By the same developer: Block Gal

01 It's not the greatest platformer ever made, but it was one of the few Master System titles that went on to become synonymous with the system. And any game about a fox battling a god has to make it on to some kind of list. Apparently the prequel to the awesomely entitled *Magical Flying Hat Turbo Adventure* (which would later become known as *DecapAttack* in the West), *Psycho Fox* is a wonderfully vivid platform adventure that's quite a bugger to master if we're being totally frank. Boasting Mario-style warping and the funniest attack in any videogame ever; a punch which looks a little like Psycho Fox is continually getting enamoured and knocking things out with something that resembles a hairy slowworm chewing on an apple. We'll let you guys fill in the blanks.

Alex Kidd in Miracle World

Released: 1986

Published by: SEGA

Created by: In-house

By the same developer: Virtua Racing

02 The coolest videogame character ever was doing the heavy-fringed, shell-suited look long before the words 'our' and 'kid' were annoyingly put together. Living inside the Master System II, this game would be hailed as the greatest freebie in videogame lore (until *Christmas NiGHTS* was given away with a magazine many years later), and by default it became the console's quintessential platformer. As big-fisted Alex Kidd, players must traverse imaginative worlds to compete in the Paper, Scissors and Stone World Cup. He's up against competitors that have had intense plastic surgery to make themselves look like a piece of paper, a pair of scissors and a fleshy rock, in the hope it will give them an edge in the competition. Jerks.

Operation Wolf

Released: 1990

Published by: SEGA

Created by: In-house

By the same developer: Space Harrier

03 Taito was faced with the very difficult decision of which direction to steer this project in. It could either take the veterinary-arcade simulator route with an emphasis on saving wolves, or create a game about one man with a gun taking on a coconut shy of angry soldiers while helping to liberate a group of thoroughly terrified hostages. Taito decided to roll with the latter option – the correct decision, we reckon. With the Master System's chunky Light Phaser controlling your shooting and a second pad providing the trigger for your grenade attacks, playing the game while sitting on a tumble dryer – thus replicating the sensation of the arcade cab's recoil – all made for a really great home conversion of this warfare classic. All things considered, it's possibly the Master System's finest arcade conversion.

California Games

Released: 1987

Published by: SEGA

Created by: Epyx

By the same developer: Impossible Mission

04 The 8-bit consoles weren't really renowned for their fantastic sporting titles, and the Master System had some of the worst examples on any system. If anyone has ever been unlucky enough to play any of the machine's 'Great' series of sports titles (*Great Football*, *Great Soccer*, *Great Juxtaposition of the word Great*) you'll know exactly where we're coming from. And don't even get us started on *Basketball Nightmare*. However, you may well remember the Earth tilting slightly on its axis after the release of Epyx's brilliant *California Games*. While playing through the game's six events had a tendency to make you feel like one of those annoying kids from *Saved By The Bell*, in its own goofy way it offered a nice slice of sun-kissed sporting action, and it looked fantastic to boot.

R-Type

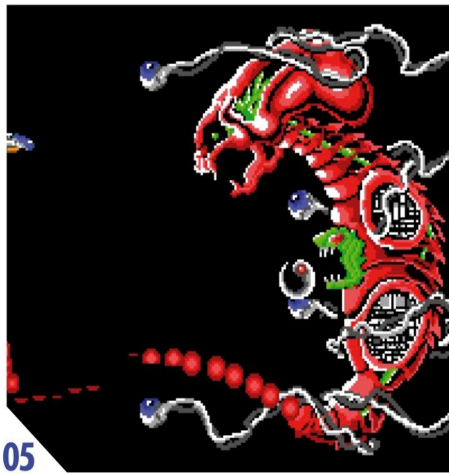
Released: 1987

Published by: SEGA

Created by: Irem

By the same developer: In the Hunt

05 The force is strong in this conversion. Irem's classic side-scrolling blaster is still one of the finest examples of the genre. Apart from the annoying flickering of the enemies, the Master System port offers an incredibly faithful reproduction of the game's bleak Giger frames and its myriad bullet-spewing enemies. *R-Type* is teeming with memorable sections, but arguably the most iconic is the encounter with the game's first boss, Dobkeratops. When those lights faded and you encountered death's alien glare in the form of an ugly giant shrimp, you knew those Bydo boys weren't the type of evil intergalactic federation to just roll over and hand you the keys to their demise. A fantastic conversion that even boasts its very own secret level.



05



06



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Baku Baku Animal

Released: 1998

Published by: SEGA

Created by: In-House

By the same developer:

Space Harrier

06 Yes, it's another tried and tested take on *Tetris*, but Sega's excellent *Baku Baku Animal* was a puzzle game that finally gave those faceless regimented sprites a touch of character. The falling tiles here were made up of either different types of food or animal faces, and the aim was to simply bunch the falling groceries together and get the corresponding animals to consume them. So the dogs were grouped with the bones, the monkeys with the bananas, the rabbits with the carrots and the pandas with the, well, we're sure you get the idea. It all makes for an incredibly enjoyable little puzzle game that also happens to be extremely addictive. It certainly cocks a leg and whizzes over the Mega Drive yawn-fest that is *Columns*. Arguably the Master System's best puzzler – you can quote us on that.

Wonder Boy III: The Dragon's Trap

Released: 1989

Published by: SEGA

Created by: Westone

By the same developer:

Wonder Boy In Monster Land

07 Regarded as the pinnacle of a long and highly convoluted myriad of multi-titled games, *Wonder Boy III: The Dragon's Trap* was yet another stellar addition to this stable of run-'n'-jump-cum-adventure-type outings. This one is also the most finely tuned in terms of gameplay and, despite its length, it somehow maintains a fantastic pace throughout. Within its first few minutes you enter a castle, blind some cyclops, uncover a strange dungeon and battle a dinobot that turns you into a dragon with its last dying breath. After that you're turned into a wide variety of different animals, each of which gradually allows you to explore more and more of the huge game world. *The Dragon's Trap* is a great adventure that every Master System fan needs to own.

Prince of Persia

Released: 1989

Published by: Broderbund

Created by: In-House

By the same developer:

Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?

08 You have 60 minutes to find a way through this Persian rat-maze to try and stop the evil Grand Vizier Jaffa from marrying your girlfriend and fooling around with her on a giant, rotating heart-shaped bed. This will be no easy feat, however, as the route is precarious and the pitfalls are plenty. But with a game so fluid and colourful, seeing your Arabian protagonist drop a thousand feet and hit the ground like a sack of potatoes was one of the most charming-looking deaths to be found on the Master System. This conversion – like all the rest – looks great. The only bad point to be found is the Master System's doughy D-pad isn't really a fan of precision. It's still a cracking platformer though and is arguably one of the greatest on the System. If only it wasn't so hard.

Sonic the Hedgehog

Released: 1991

Published by: SEGA

Created by: In-House

By the same developer:

Outrun

09 Up, down, left, right, A, B, C, Start, sadly proved impossible to perform on the Master System's cumbersome control pad, but the most well-known level-select cheat ever wasn't the only thing that was altered for the Master System port. Due to the graphical 8-bit chasm that presented itself, Sonic's first (and second, for that matter) outing on the system was a complete redux of its 16-bit sibling. However, the Master System version was all the better for it and proved to be a stunning platformer in its own right. It also meant that those who were lucky enough to own both a Master System and a Mega Drive would be treated to two slightly differing classic Sonic adventures. Now surely that can only ever be seen as a very good thing?

Phantasy Star

Released: 1988

Published by: SEGA

Created by: In-House

By the same developer:

Ristar

10 Sega's freshman RPG epic would smite its inaugural winged-eyeball on the Master System. There's a tiring amount of features, strategy and powering-up in the game, and the 3D tunnel effects were dazzling. *Phantasy Star* was a more than worthy sparring partner to Miyamoto's prevalent *Zelda* and Square's *Final Fantasy* series, mainly because it chose a setting that was instantly at odds with the generic fantasy worlds of those games. It's a beautifully constructed game, boasting a fantastically epic planet-hopping storyline polarised around one girl's quest to seek revenge for the untimely death of her nosey brother. However, unlike Sega's sophomore retribution epic, the original *Phantasy Star* doesn't pick up its football and disappear home in the 89th minute.



SESAME STREET

Children's television took a major step forward in 1966, when producer Joan Ganz Cooney approached the VP of the Carnegie Foundation, Lloyd Morrisett, with the idea of making TV educational. Over the next three years, with funding from the US government, the team created a show that put puppets and humans side-by-side on a fictional New York City street.

Sesame Street was the first preschool TV show to use formative research as the basis for its production values and content, and the response was huge. The show had impressive ratings, and the Muppet characters were firm favourites with kids.

The Muppets – including famous characters like Elmo and Bert and Ernie – were creations of Jim Henson, who worked on the show for over 20 years. It was here that he gained

fame for his work, and saw characters like Kermit the Frog and Cookie Monster hit the mainstream. At first, the plan was for the Muppets and human characters to appear separately, to avoid confusing children. However, test audiences didn't like this format, and Henson was asked to create new characters to help the cast mix with the Muppets. Characters like Big Bird and Oscar the Grouch were introduced to the 'Street' scenes, complementing the animated and Muppet-focused shorts. Henson directed the original 'C is for Cookie', and also produced a series of shorts about counting to ten.

Sesame Street expanded its topics over the years to include emotions and ethics, and has been broadcast in over 120 countries. The series continues today on HBO, alongside weekly half-hour shows available online.

While the show featured regular segments, researchers initially suggested that young viewers wouldn't be able to follow ongoing stories. Each segment was therefore a standalone clip, and this style continued until season 20, when it was decided that children could follow an evolving storyline.

The show aired on public TV in the US, ensuring anyone with a television set could watch it – including lower-income families. This continued until 2016, when the rights were bought by premium TV service HBO. However, PBS will still air the show, for free, so that all families can enjoy it.

Information

Original Broadcaster: PBS (US), ITV (UK)
First Released: 1969
Number of episodes: 4,300+



By the middle of the 1970s, *Sesame Street* had become a household name, and the cast and crew of the show expanded. The expansion included the addition of female crew members, and minorities to the cast, to offer a more inclusive view of the world.



The Legacy

Sesame Street saw Jim Henson become a household name, and allowed him to create *The Muppet Show* in 1976. The show was a huge success thanks to its characters and guest stars, winning multiple Emmy Awards and BAFTAs.

Sesame Street continued to be a commercial success, too, and the team expanded its cast to include ethnically diverse actors and actresses. The show has now been running for almost 50 years, and is approaching its 4,400th episode.

© Alamy/Getty

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

Remembering how four half-shelled reptiles and a mutant rat rose from the sewers to cover the world in pepperoni pizza, nunchucks and gallons of green ooze

The 1980s were chock-full of memorable franchises, but only one dared to showcase a team of anthropomorphic, martial arts-inclined, half-shelled reptiles. Given their worldwide success, it's easy to forget that the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles had a rather humble rise from the proverbial radioactive ooze. Born from the minds of artists Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1983, the turtles began as a kind of goof between the two creators during a lighthearted brainstorming session. The new venture was meant to parody other popular comic franchises like *Cerebus*, *Ronin*, *Daredevil* and *New Mutants* – a canister of glowing goo accidentally breaks into a bowl of ectotherms, which promptly falls into the Manhattan sewer system. And so begins the tale of Leonardo, Donatello, Raphael, Michelangelo and their giant, mutant rat sensei, Splinter.

In 1984, once the independent project was complete, TMNT #1 debuted in a self-published, black and white (with red cover), rather mature, \$1.50 single-issue comic by Kevin and Peter's newly minted Mirage Studio – a venture funded with a convenient \$500 tax refund, Peter's

\$200 life savings and a generous \$1,300 loan from Kevin's uncle. After ordering the first 3,000 copy print run, the duo smartly managed to place an eye-catching ad in industry insider publication *Comic Buyer's Guide*, and in very 'Heroes in a Half Shell' fashion, the comic quickly started to gain traction. By way of popular demand, a second issue was completed and published in 1985, and by 1986, TMNT had garnered licensing interest from a minuscule toy company in California called Playmates. Proper action figures were proposed, as well as a highly marketable, tie-in cartoon miniseries.

As the gritty comic books continued their meteoric rise in popularity, Playmates requested some age-appropriate changes for the toy line and TV show, mostly by way of memorable catchphrases to replace any swearing (think 'Turtle Power' and 'Cowabunga'), colour-coded face masks and costumes to differentiate the turtles, a strong emphasis on lighthearted humour, and the bizarre addition of a constant pizza craving. Also, in an effort to appease TV censors, the series' signature violence was notably curbed – the Foot Clan was transformed from warm-blooded







to pass to friends. After-school hours were filled with watching the official cartoon and long sessions of TMNT videogames (once homework was finished, of course).

And on that note, who could forget the turtles' inevitable expansion into the interactive entertainment realm? It began with the notoriously difficult *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by Ultra Games on the NES (oh, the electrified water level, how we loathe thee), followed soon by a pair of excellent arcade multiplayer beat-em'-ups: the classic *TMNT: The Arcade Game*, which was ported to the NES as *Turtles II: The Arcade Game*, and then a worthy follow-up with *Turtles in Time*, an amazing brawler ported to the SNES as *TMNT IV: Turtles in Time* and to the Mega Drive as a reworked port in *Hyperstone Heist*. Still, that's not even touching on all the interesting spin-offs on DOS/PC (like the comic-centric *Manhattan Missions*),

Game Boy, and the infamously bad Tiger handheld devices. Yet even with as many videogames that the turtles spawned, one could say that they didn't hit the pinnacle of franchise domination until Hollywood came calling, and come calling it did.

Once TMNT reached ultimate market saturation, it was only a matter of time before screenplays were written and the silver screen was, in turn, dripping with ooze. 1990 saw the release of the turtles' first feature-length film, a live-action movie showcasing advanced costumes created by Jim Henson's Creature Shop and voice-acting from notable

"Every kid at school wore TMNT T-shirts, brought their sandwich in a TMNT lunchbox"

humans who could get seriously hurt to numb robots that lacked the ability to feel any real pain. Additionally, April O'Neil changed professions from a computer programmer to a news reporter, and in terms of sheer menace, Shredder was significantly toned down. Even though Peter has since expressed his disdain for the PG reimagining, this marketing-driven move more or less kick-started TMNT's rise to mainstream success, as the miniseries was subsequently expanded into a massively popular TV show and the toys acquired a flying-off-the-shelves life of their own.

GOING GLOBAL

By 1987, the TV show had become syndicated, the lottery jackpot for any children's cartoon. This beneficial development, paired with the hugely successful action figure line, propelled what became colloquially known as Turtlemania. The insane pop culture phenomenon seemed to spread to every corner of the globe, seeing the four green heroes plastered on every conceivable piece of saleable merchandise – stickers, towels, snack pies, breakfast cereal, bedsheets, pyjamas, fruit snacks. Even pasta bore tubular 'Cowabunga' branding. We all went to at least two or three TMNT-themed birthday parties, didn't we? Every kid at school wore TMNT T-shirts, brought their sandwich in a TMNT lunchbox and, with TMNT-themed pencils, wrote funny notes

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV: Turtles in Time

Considered the ultimate multiplayer beat-'em-up in some circles, this port of the 1991 arcade game is fairly faithful to the original coin-op. Throw Foot Soldiers at the screen, jump into a wild time warp and guide the turtles through a smattering of historical stages, including prehistoric landscapes, pirate ships and futuristic hoverboard freeways. The SNES version sadly only supports two players simultaneously as opposed to the arcade's four, but it's still one of the best co-op experiences you can have. Plus it's not difficult to find and won't cost you an arm and a leg.





Party Wagon

The turtles' trusty get-around van, the Party Wagon features a spring-loaded Foot Tenderizer seat, Foot Finder radar blaster and turtle-green plated armour. Playmates put out the original toy in 1988, then re-released it decades later under the Classic Collection.



was simply that palpable sense of 'cool' the turtles emanated between high-threes and peanut butter and clam pizza binges. Michelangelo never had the best taste, but kids didn't seem to mind in the least, and the sales numbers didn't lie.

COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

Even in 2017, the turtles remain strong, though in terms of publishers and distributors, they have passed through several sets of hands. Nickelodeon acquired the rights in 2012 and created several fresh show seasons, forsaking traditional cell animation for a more contemporary CGI aesthetic. To the chagrin and delight of TMNT fans the world over, producer Michael Bay released two modern turtles movies, and Playmates, which still handles the toys, is still pumping out new action figures every year.

Perhaps that's why collectors are still fascinated with the franchise – these half-shelled heroes simply refuse to be relegated to the sewers of bygone obscurity. Due to TMNT's multiple decade run, the sheer variety of collectible pieces is overwhelming. While the ocean of TMNT memorabilia keeps deepening, vintage merchandise continues to go up in value, and there's really no shortage of holy grail pieces to pursue. Obscure carded figures like Hot Spot routinely sell for between \$400 and \$500, while the extremely sought-after Scratch is creeping into the \$1,000 range for one in brand new, factory-sealed condition. Even more common toys, like the Mighty Maxesque Mini Mutants playsets, command significant prices.

If you're looking to start a TMNT collection without emptying the bank, there are toys on retail store shelves today, along with all manner of auxiliary merchandise, though these products do represent the modern

reimagining of the turtles. But that brings up a question: Why is the TMNT collector's market still so vibrant? It could be an age factor: many mega-fans were kids in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and now they're adults with disposable incomes. It could also be the simple fact that because of the franchise's continual rebooting, there's a new wave of TMNT collectors entering the market every few years, making those eBay auctions ever more difficult to win. And that's really a testament to the characters' universal appeal. Regardless of the generations involved, these turtles continue to excite and enthrall. So everyone now, young and old: Cowabunga!



Eighties stars like Corey Feldman. Following a massive box office success, especially for what was technically an independent film, a sequel followed by way of *Secret of the Ooze* in 1991, which would feature Vanilla Ice and his radical single 'Ninja Rap', a cassette on permanent repeat in every schoolkid's boombox. A third movie followed, but wasn't nearly as well received.

So really, what was truly fanning the TMNT fire? Could it have been the focus on martial arts, a subject that tapped into every little boy's innate desire to wield a katana and throw down a seriously sweet roundhouse kick? Or was it the imaginative characters, running the gamut from sentient, disembodied brain to a mutant manta ray and an interdimensional worm? Maybe it





PADDINGTON BEAR



Paddington Bear's origins go back to 1956, but the first stuffed toy based on the character did not appear for another 16 years. By then, Michael Bond had already written many of his much-loved books, the first of which was *A Bear Named Paddington*.

Accompanied by beautiful drawings from the pen of illustrator Peggy Fortnum, it had been inspired by a toy bear Bond had purchased at Selfridges for his wife. He'd named it after the London railway station and loved it to bits – just as those who got their hands on Paddington did in 1972.

First to show interest in creating Paddington Bears was a small company called Gabrielle Designs, which had been started by Shirley and Eddie Clarkson from a spare room of their home. It was rather fitting that they should take this task upon themselves, given the quintessentially British nature of the character, and the bears were an instant success, bringing great joy to thousands of children.

It was they who cemented the look of the trademark hat, duffle coat and Wellington boots, the latter in particular proving so crucial because they allowed the bear to stand. There may have been no battered suitcase accompanying the toy, and children would have to imagine Paddington's penchant for marmalade, but the bears flew off the shelves. Indeed, according to Shirley, who wrote a book about the toy called *Bearly Believable: My Part In The Paddington Bear Story*, retailers from across the world wanted to sell the bear and the company struggled to keep up with demand.

Even so, there were some problems with 50,000 bears having faulty eyes, while a strike by the workforce caused supplies to stutter. But kids were oblivious to all of that and Paddington wouldn't be Paddington without a few scrapes. Indeed, children enjoyed being close to the beloved bear and they looked after him well: just as the luggage tag around his neck asked them to.



▲ The best-selling year for Paddington Bear stuffed toys was 1978, with Gabrielle Designs seeing as many as 87,000 being snapped up. Sadly, the company closed just 20 years later, even though it was still making Paddington Bear toys. Critics suggested the bear had been usurped by rival characters such as the Teletubbies.

▼ Although Yorkshire-based Gabrielle Designs made Paddington Bears in the United Kingdom, another company called Eden Toys manufactured them in the United States. These were created from 1975 and they were also based on Michael Bond's fabulous series of books.



PADDINGTON BEAR

Original Paddington Bears by Gabrielle Designs were made with acrylic fur and had boots made by wellie-makers Dunlop. They also had orange eyes and a plastic dog-like nose. They would come with an assortment of outfits, making them rather collectible, though the duffle coat was always a favourite.

Information

Manufacturer Gabrielle Designs
First Released 1972
Expect to pay £150

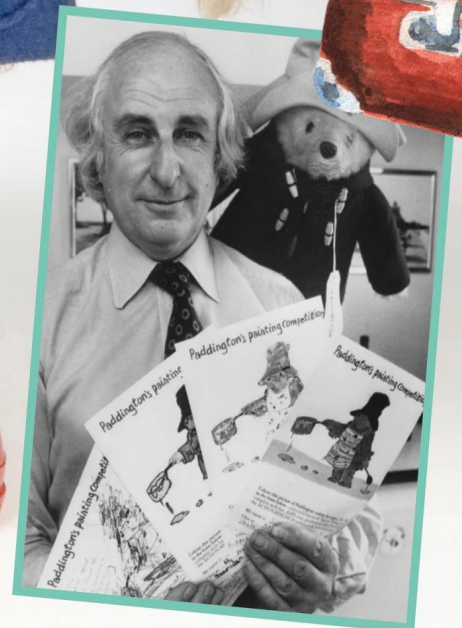


The first person to receive a Paddington Bear stuffed toy was a 12-year-old boy called Jeremy Clarkson, who received his gift in 1971. Many will know him as the former presenter of *Top Gear*, but back then he was simply the son of Shirley and Eddie – the couple who ran Gabrielle Designs, the company that eventually got the license for toys based on the character.



The Legacy

As well as Michael Bond's books, Paddington Bear hit the small screen courtesy of the BBC, which premiered its debut series in 1976. It made 56 episodes in total and followed them up with specials in the 1980s. Further series were then made with the most recent being in 1997. But in 2014, a hugely successful movie was released, sparking a sequel in 2017. StudioCanal is now working on a new TV series based on those live-action films.



POGS

Information

Manufacturer: Various

First Released: 1920s

Expect to pay: £3.99 (25 caps and two slammers)

Throwing a small metal disc at a pile of lighter circular discs doesn't sound like much. But it was an essential playground skill in the Nineties, as mastering that art was the only way you could triumph in Pogs, one of the most fiercely competitive games of our childhoods.

Pogs grew out of a game in Hawaii in the 1920s, where you slammed milk caps against a stack of your opponent's milk caps to flip them. Any that were flipped were yours to keep.

Even though it seemed like everyone in the playground owned Pogs, not everyone played the game. Some just wanted to

collect them for their cool designs and didn't want to risk losing them in playground wars, especially as they became more and more sought after. Unlike Panini stickers or My Little Pony, the point of collecting Pogs wasn't to try to collect a full set. Pogs were so widespread and available from so many different places, it was almost impossible to do that. Instead, the point was trying to get the most unique, cool-looking Pog you can find and show it off to your friends.

As the popularity of Pogs exploded, you could find free ones from crisps, cereals, McDonald's Happy Meals, almost everywhere. Their small, cheap nature made them a huge success.



During the Nineties, Pogs were actually used by the US Army and Air Force as overseas currency.

Their comparatively cheap design helped cut the cost of shipping heavy coins to army bases around the world.



The official mascot of Pogs came in the form of toothy caveman creature Pogman. As well as appearing in various guises on the back of the discs, he also starred in his own line of books.

The Legacy

Pogs essentially became a victim of their own success. Like other playground fads, teachers worried about the impact Pogs were having. With fights breaking out over lost Pogs and students being distracted from class, Pogs were banned by some schools and eventually their popularity fizzled out. There hasn't been a modern-day successor, although some Pog tournaments are still held for hardcore players.



Despite the small size, the furniture in the Sylvanian world is immensely detailed. Many Japanese people excel at tiny, hand-crafted creations and Sylvanian Families is a perfect example of their eye for detail.



Information

Original Manufacturer Epoch

First Released 1985

Expect to pay £15.99 (Cosy Cottage starter set)

Sylvanian Families proved to be a big hit in the UK and it secured the 'Toy of the Year' award from British Association of Toy Retailers three years in a row. To date, it's still the only toy to have achieved that feat.



In 1985, Japanese company Epoch had the smart idea of combining doll-houses with tiny, adorable animals. With the animals made of porcelain and the furniture crafted from wood, there was a detailed, intimate feel to the toys.

The toy-line was called Pleasant Friends of the Forest Epoch System Collection Animal Toy Sylvanian Families. When increasing sales saw the toys brought to American and European shores,

the toy-line was (somewhat sensibly) renamed Sylvanian Families. While the miniature animal dolls saw the Sylvanian Families first find success, it was when the animated series was launched a few years later that they truly became a household name. Set in 1950s Britain, the stories centred on unhappy children who are transported to the Sylvanian world to fix their problems. The different animal families who live in Sylvanian world – such as the

Wildwoods (rabbits), Evergreens (bears) and Thistlethorns (mice) – work together with the human children who arrive. For example, one episode sees Joey wanting to be wise to other children's tricks. When he's transported to the Sylvanian world, Joey helps the Wildwoods come up with a plan to stop the dastardly Packbat snatching their carrots. In another, wheelchair-bound Chrissie gets her wish to go on an adventure when she ends up in the Sylvanian world.

SYLVANIAN FAMILIES



The Legacy

Sylvanian Families remains popular in Japan. In recent years, there has been a Sylvanian Families amusement park, Sylvanian Families musicals, and dedicated stores. Epoch still sells Sylvanian Families toys in the UK through a recently opened UK branch of the company.

CAPTAIN PLANET AND THE PLANETEERS

Information

Manufacturer: DIC Entertainment

First Released: 1990

Expect to pay: £19.99
(import DVD)

In an era of brightly coloured, super-sized heroes, it took something special to stand out. Captain Planet was unforgettable, his radiant design ensuring that he lingered in the memory long after the credits for each episode had finished rolling. With crystal blue skin, a green mullet, fiery red clothes and yellow globe burning bright like the sun on his chest, Captain Planet symbolised a healthy, vibrant Earth.

Captain Planet was the hero summoned by the Planeteers. The Planeteers are guardians chosen by Gaia, the spirit of Earth, who is woken from a century-

long slumber by the dangerous levels of pollution on the planet. The five Planeteers were drawn from all corners of the globe: Ghana, the US, Brazil, the Soviet Union and Asia. It gave Captain Planet an international flavour its fellow cartoons lacked, both in its day and even now.

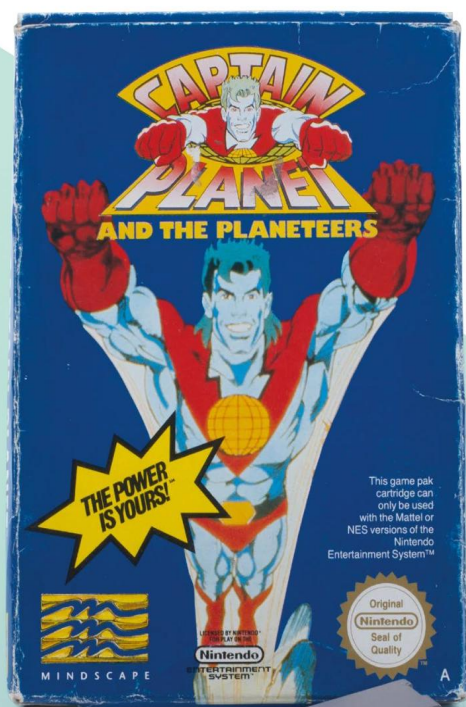
With the antagonists calling themselves Eco-Villains, made up of members like Verminous Skumm and Dr Blight, *Captain Planet* featured an environmentally friendly message. Each episode found time during the action to explain problems facing nature and the environment, such as how burning coal leads to acid rain or how elephants are being hunted for ivory. Not every episode was grounded in reality – one plot saw Eco-Villains spreading a disease that turned people into rats – but the central message of protecting the Earth was always the same. From the striking look of its hero to the idea of different nations working together, there was a lot unique about *Captain Planet*, which is why it's still remembered so fondly today.

Most of the environmental issues are detailed through Wheeler's ignorance, as he needs Gaia to explain to him why the planet is being harmed by the actions of the Eco-Villains.

As the series progresses, however, Wheeler learns and becomes more knowledgeable.

Captain Planet occasionally veered away from environmental issues into more adult territory, especially for a children's cartoon. One episode focused on drug addiction while another addressed the AIDS pandemic, and the stigma that surrounds those who have it.

Gi is the Planeteer who wears the Water Ring and she's especially compassionate for marine life. It's never revealed exactly where she's from – she's just described as being from Asia in the cartoon – although the creators would later say Gi is from Malaysia.



The Legacy

Captain Planet has been absent from our screens for a while, but he's not completely forgotten. The Mother Nature Network, the biggest website in the world dedicated to sustainability, hosts episodes and unseen footage.



© Hanna-Barbera/Courtesy Everett Collection/Alamy

PANINI STICKERS

Got. Got. Got. Need. Got. Need. Need. Got. Got. Got. That was the monosyllabic rite of passage in the playground for any kid who had Panini stickers, when everyone got their swapsies out and started trading stickers to complete their collection.

It's simple enough. You buy a Panini sticker album, usually football-themed, which is full of pages and pages of empty numbered slots. You then buy packs of stickers and start sticking them in the numbered slots. Steady hands were necessary to get the stickers exactly in place – the only way to fix a sticker that's been placed at a wonky angle is

to get a duplicate and stick that over the top. No-one concentrated as hard as someone carefully placing a sticker in their albums.

Because each pack is random, there's no telling what you'd get, which led to the playground practice of seeing what your friends had and swapping ones they need for stickers you need. Almost every football fan would have a pile of their swapsies at home, usually with a rubber band wrapped around them as the pile grew increasingly big.

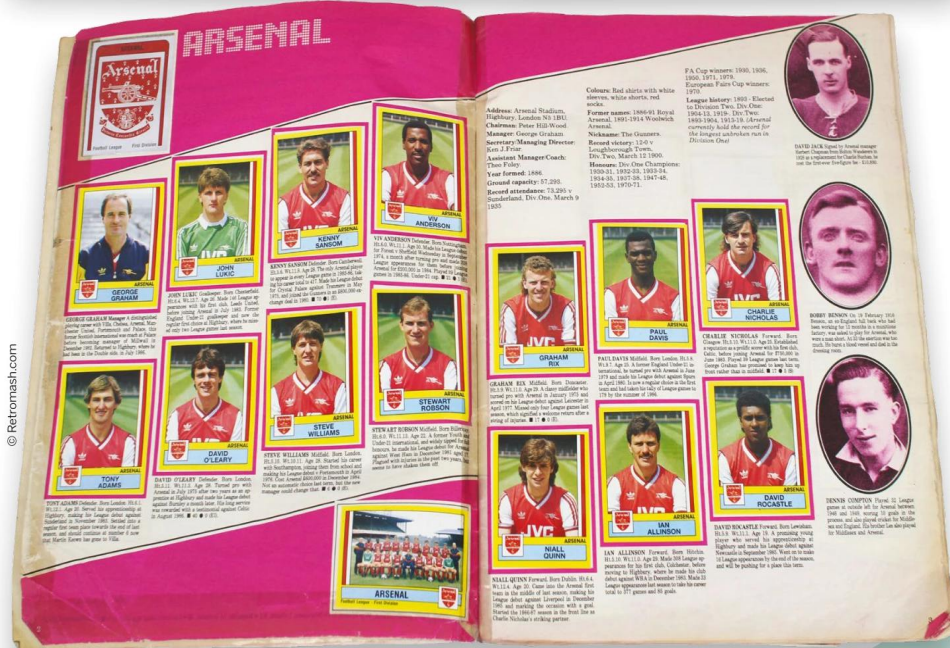
Panini has since spread to America, where it has the licence for NBA and NFL, while it also produces stickers for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.



Information

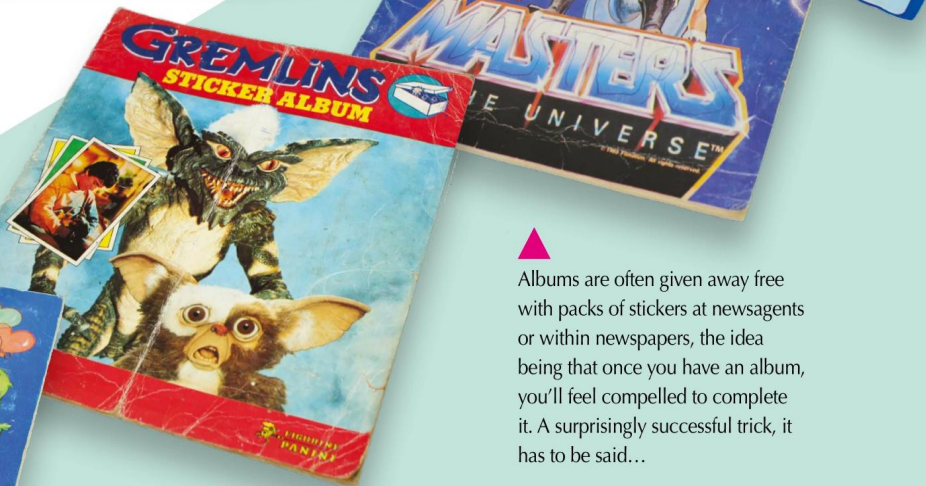
Manufacturer: Panini
First Released: 1960
Expect to pay: £5.99
 (for 10 sealed packs)





Panini offers a special service where you can specifically buy the stickers you're missing, although this comes at a premium price. Which is why swapsies are so important!

Although Panini covers big sporting events, the Premier League and even films such as *Fantastic Beasts*, it's the big football tournaments like the Euros and the World Cup which are when Panini sticker mania is at its most fervent.



Albums are often given away free with packs of stickers at newsagents or within newspapers, the idea being that once you have an album, you'll feel compelled to complete it. A surprisingly successful trick, it has to be said...

Because you didn't know what was inside each pack, part of the Panini ritual was buying as many packs of stickers as you could afford with your pocket money and then tearing through them all while your friends watched with envy.



HEROQUEST

It only lasted for five short years but HeroQuest still managed to make a huge impact on everyone that played it. Discover why it's still worth seeking out today

Chances are if you were a fan of *Fighting Fantasy* books or *Dungeons & Dragons*, there's a strong possibility that you would have played this classic and highly popular board game.

Created by Hasbro's Stephen Baker and released in 1989, *HeroQuest* was effectively a more accessible version of *Dungeons & Dragons*, TSR's highly successful role-playing game, which had risen to prominence in the late Seventies and early Eighties. Like *Dungeons & Dragons*, one player controlled the game – playing the role of the evil wizard

Morcar – while the others took on the roles of mighty adventurers, hoping to plunder the treasure of whatever enemies they faced in Morcar's dangerous dungeons. The available heroes were typical archetypal classes and included a powerful barbarian, a ferocious dwarf, and a wizard and elf that both had access to deadly spells.

Created in collaboration with Games Workshop, *HeroQuest* featured a number of familiar monsters from GW's universes, including fimir and chaos warriors, as well as more traditional fantasy-based monsters that ranged from skeletons

and mummies to orcs and goblins. In total, 31 well-detailed monsters were included with the core set, along with many pieces of furniture that ranged from tables and cupboards to an alchemist's bench and treasure chests.

The actual game board was also worth mentioning as it consisted of 22 rooms and numerous passageways, which could then be reconfigured to create brand new dungeons thanks to the clever placement of doors. Add in a large number of tiles, which represented everything from pit traps and falling blocks to blocked passageways, a huge number of different spell cards and



the long list of various treasure items for the heroes to use and *HeroQuest* represented incredible value for money. It was by no means the most original of games, but its timing was perfect, leading to a great many expansions in the following years.

GOING GLOBAL

Although *Dungeons & Dragons* was extremely popular the world over, numerous controversies during the early Eighties meant that its influence began to shrink, particularly in the UK. Whereas it was once available for sale in many prominent retailers, it instead began to get distributed into smaller,

specialist hobby stores. *HeroQuest* on the other hand had no such issues and it was available from virtually any prominent retailer that was selling board games at the time. Baker's game sat proudly aside the likes of *Hungry Hippos* and *Mouse Trap*, where its distinctive packaging instantly stood out.

Another reason *HeroQuest* became so popular was due to its sheer accessibility. While its rules were rather expansive for the time, they were nowhere near as intimidating as those for *Dungeons & Dragons*, meaning that everyone could begin playing with very little preparation. Whereas a dungeon master for *D&D* might spend hours creating

the framework for their adventure, before the first moves even took place, the person controlling Morcar needed to do little more than reconfigure the game board as the players entered new parts of the dungeon. Simple die mechanics for combat kept things nice and straightforward, while the use of different spells meant that players could try out different combinations

Its success in the UK, Australia and Europe saw it getting released in the US and Canada during 1990, with several changes made to the gameplay that made it much more difficult than its UK counterpart. Many of the dungeons featured far more monsters

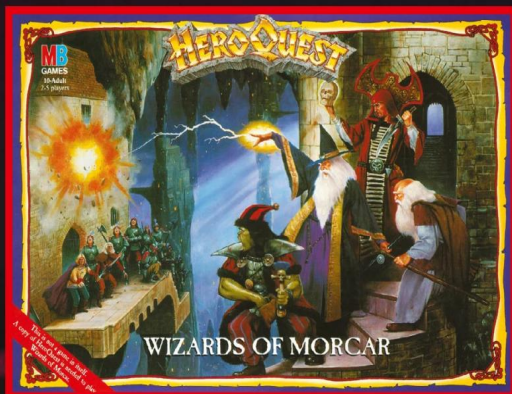
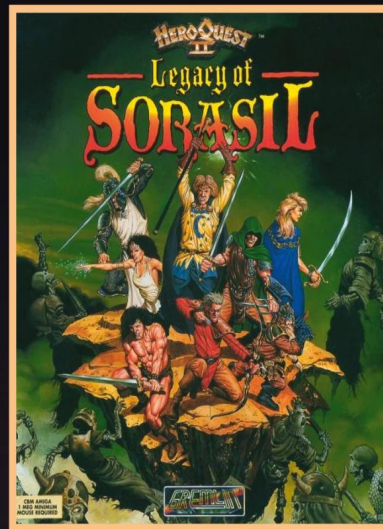


Advanced HeroQuest

This was released the same year as *HeroQuest*, but was published by Games Workshop. It's a far more complicated game than the original due to RPG-like rules, better quality tiles and more detailed models. It lacks the variety in its monsters, though, as all the enemies are Skaven.

HeroQuest II: Legacy Of Sorasil

The original computer adaptation of *HeroQuest* was extremely popular, appearing on several 8- and 16-bit computers at the time of release. The sequel is equally good, featuring brand new missions and the same flexible icon system that was used to control everything from moving to fighting monsters.



HeroQuest: Wizards Of Morcar

This and *Against The Ogre Horde* were the last expansions to be released for *HeroQuest*. Packaged in a larger box than the earlier expansions, it features a number of new monsters and significantly enhances the spell capabilities of the Elf and Wizard characters. It's continually rising in price, particularly if it's complete in box.

"You'll need deep pockets if you want to own the Advanced Quest edition of the game and all six expansions"



than before, some of them harder to defeat due to having more hit points. Heroes were rewarded with more gold upon clearing dungeons, so it wasn't all bad news.

HeroQuest's popularity resulted in the release of numerous upgrades and expansions in the following years, ensuring that players always had exciting new quests to participate in. *Advanced HeroQuest* was a greatly enhanced game that appeared the same year as *HeroQuest*, published solely by Games Workshop. It featured a more complicated rule set than the original game, added completely modular board pieces and henchmen, and pitted the adventurers against the Skaven, a vicious tribe of evil rat-men. A brand new version of the core game, called *HeroQuest Advanced Quest* was released in 1990 and added a new 13-part adventure called *The Dark Company*, as well as the use of henchmen. It was known in Germany as *HeroQuest Master Edition*.

Keller's Keep was the first expansion released for *HeroQuest*, adding additional monsters, tiles, board overlays and a brand new ten-part quest, while *Return Of The Witch Lord* was more of the same, but had a distinct undead theme and a further ten new quests for the heroes to embark on. An Adventure Design Kit was also released early in *HeroQuest's* lifespan and was designed specifically so that players could create

their own standalone adventures (although there was nothing stopping players from using their own pen and paper to achieve the same goal). Two additional expansions were introduced in the US and Canada, but never made it to Europe, and as a result are now quite rare. *Mage Of The Mirror* added ten quests, including three designed solely for playing as the Elf character, while *The Frozen Horror* was designed for the Barbarian.

While several of the above expansions appeared in 1991, the year was also notable for introducing a surprisingly good videogame adaptation that was created by Gremlin Interactive and released across a number of popular platforms at the time, including the Amiga, Spectrum, Commodore 64 and PC. A planned conversion was also in the works for the NES, but it never reached completion. A sequel, *HeroQuest II: Legacy Of Sorasil* arrived in 1994 for the Amiga 1200 and CD32, but it never reached the same large audience as its predecessor.

In 1992 *HeroQuest* won the coveted Origins Award for 'Best Graphic Presentation Of A Boardgame In 1991', which further added to its appeal, but the success wasn't to last and just two more expansions were created for the *HeroQuest* line. Fortunately, both of them were rather excellent, ensuring the short-lived franchise went out with a suitable bang. *Against The Ogre Horde* was a far larger expansion than previous one, which introduced a variety of different ogres to battle, additional double-sided room tiles and an excellent new quest book featuring seven tough adventures, while *Wizards Of Morcar* suitably expanded the abilities of the Elf and Wizard characters and introduced several new spells and treasure cards. Three novels were also released, which took the

style of *Fighting Fantasy* adventures, but also included additional standalone quests for certain characters. They're now highly collectible, although the same can be said for all of *HeroQuest's* products. In fact, such was its popularity that a number of unofficial expansions exist, ranging from *Dungeons Of Peril* to *The Mountain Keep* during the early Noughties, which were created by fans to keep the love of *HeroQuest* alive.

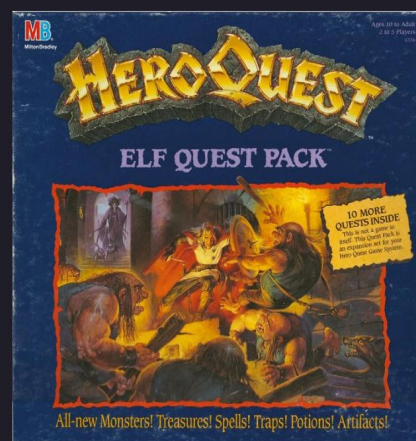
COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

HeroQuest may have only lasted for five short years, but it was massively popular during that time, which means a fierce collector's market has now sprung up for it in recent years. The sheer number of components that were released for the core game means that many collectors will pay a lot of money for a 100 per cent complete version of the game – more so if the original figures remain unpainted. The expansions, which were released in ever smaller numbers than the core game, are even more coveted and we've seen non-boxed add-ons sell for silly amounts online, meaning you'll need to have rather deep pockets if you want to own the *Advanced Quest* edition of the game and all six expansions. The *Fighting Fantasy*-style adventures continue to rise in price, while more and more people seem to be seeking out *HeroQuest's* computer spin-offs, particularly the CD32 version of the sequel.

Ultimately, *HeroQuest* remains highly collectible today, because it's still fantastic fun to play. Sure, it lacks the complexity of more modern dungeon crawlers such as *Descent: Journeys In The Dark* and *Wrath Of Ashardalon*, but it's as enjoyable now as it was in 1989, and that's what matters to its many fans found all over the world.

HeroQuest Quest Packs

The most sought-after *HeroQuest* items are the two standalone quest packs released for the Elf and Barbarian characters. It's unclear why the Dwarf and Wizard never received their own spin-off adventures, as the two expansions were excellent additions which significantly enhanced the core board game. Unlike other *HeroQuest* expansions, neither set simply reprinted monsters found in the base game. Instead they added numerous new enemies that ranged from yetis to giant wolves, as well as female characters, a first for the series. Sadly, both expansions are now extremely hard to get hold of, meaning you'll need to spend £300 to £800 to own them.



THE FRESH PRINCE OF BEL-AIR

Anyone who watched *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* during its run from 1990 to 1996 will undoubtedly be able to recite the series' backstory. It was right there in the glorious opening theme song, *Yo Home to Bel Air*, which was written and performed by DJ Jazzy Jeff and rapper-turned-actor Will Smith, who was undoubtedly the star of the show.

It was the tale of how the Fresh Prince's life got flipped-turned upside down when he got in "one little fight" and his mother got scared, and forced him to move from a rough neighbourhood. The Fresh Prince tells us how he became the prince of a town called Bel Air. But there was so much more to this show than that earworm, Quincy Jones composition, because the Fresh Prince's working-class, West Philadelphia background frequently clashed with his auntie and uncle's upper-class family.

Cue lots of humour in this classic NBC sitcom, as Smith – whose character almost bore the same name (he is William in the show, but Willard in real-life) – proved to be sharp-witted, charismatic and confident. Smith agreed to sign up because he was spending money like it was going out of fashion, and he owed \$2.8 million to the taxman. He didn't even know how to act at that time.

But he learned fast. Although the first season underperformed, the series soon picked up and, while it was formulaic and moralistic, it addressed taboo topics such as race and class, but gave viewers a good laugh while doing so. Prodding the pretentious outlook of Uncle Phil, Hilary and Carlton provided the comedy, which was gentle and fun, for this was a show that stood up because of its characters, and it helped make Will Smith the star he is today.



Much of the comedy revolved around Smith's interaction with the Banks' family. Younger cousin Ashley Banks (played by Tatyana Ali) looked up to Will as a big brother, and became rebellious as she grew older, which caused tension. The conservative Republican outlook of Carlton Banks and father Philip was also played to comedic effect.



THE FRESH PRINCE OF BEL-AIR



Having peered around the living room from the top of the stairs and noticed no one was around, Carlton (played by Alfonso Ribeiro) enthusiastically made his way down, inserted a CD into the hi-fi, made some final checks that he was alone, and then energetically danced and mimed to Tom Jones' *It's Not Unusual*. Until Will Smith appeared...



According to *The New York Times* in 1990, the producers, writers and actors wrestled with how much rap culture they should insert into the show. They feared alienating the mass audience they were targeting. Co-writer Susan Borowitz said the focus was on exploring cultural differences and bringing the characters to the fore.

'The Fresh Prince' had been Will Smith's stage name from the late 1980s. Back then, he formed part of a hugely successful hip-hop duo with DJ Jazzy Jeff (who starred in the TV show as Smith's best friend, Jazz). The pair received a Grammy for best rap performance in 1989 for the song *Parents Just Don't Understand*.

The Legacy

The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air was the first to show a truly wealthy African-American family on television, and it also cemented hip-hop music in pop culture. Will Smith became a major star: his sunny single *Summertime* in 1991 was his most successful, and he began to make movies while still filming *Fresh Prince*. He broke out in *Six Degrees of Separation* in 1993, starred in *Bad Boys* in 1995, and thumped an alien in *Independence Day* in 1996, before appearing in *Men in Black* in 1997 – the year he began his solo music career.

Information

Created by Andy and Susan Borowitz
First aired 1990
Number of seasons Six
 (148 episodes)



Babies boom' as it became known at the time – also played a role in its eventual downfall. Many were touting the plush toys as long-term investments that would pay dividends down the line, but the reality was a craze that peaked and fell rather sharply, leaving many toys that were no longer worth the thousands of pounds they had been bought for. That 'boom' did make Ty Warner one of the richest men in the toy industry, his must-have toys setting countless sales records before the decade was out.

Information

A photograph of a child's room with a dark blue wall. A shelf holds a white dog, a tiger, and a red monkey. A red monkey is also hanging from the wall. A yellow dog is on the floor, and a large white dog is in the foreground.



128



The Legacy

With creator Ty Warner famously retiring certain Beanie Babies throughout its peak, it shouldn't have come as much of a surprise when he announced in 1999 that he would be retiring the entire brand itself. He even released a commemorative bear called 'The End' to mark the occasion. Fans reacted negatively to the decision, and following a public survey, Warner decided to revive the brand in 2000. The next toy produced was called 'The Beginning', but the boom had already gone bust.

▲ An attempt was made to 'reboot' and relaunch the brand in 2008 with Beanie Babies 2.0. The new line of toys came with a code that gave the user a link to a special interactive website, but the gimmick failed to spark the same kind of heated fervour among consumers that the original incarnations had so many years before.

In 1999, Beanie Babies made the headlines for a very different reason. One couple's divorce led to a rather acrimonious confrontation when it came down to dividing up their prized collection. The collection was valued between \$2,500 and \$5,000 at the time, and the judge ordered they be brought into court and physically divided between the former husband and wife.



▲ With any big toy craze comes the inevitable knock-offs, and Beanie Babies had plenty at the height of their popularity. Counterfeit versions started surfacing around 1997, with the productions and transport of fake Beanie Babies becoming a big business on the black market. Thousands of counterfeit plushies were confiscated during the late '90s.

▲ The Beanie Babies brand had plenty of sought-after and uber-popular models, including the tie-dyed Garcia the Bear, Princess the Bear (created in memoriam for the late Princess Diana), the copyright-infringing Tabasco the Bull and the incredibly popular (and very rare) Peanut the Royal Blue Elephant.

SHE-RA

Dolls. Ponies. That was the extent of the market for toys aimed at girls in the Eighties. There was even less choice for young girls on TV screens, where strong female characters were nowhere to be seen. Mattel, which had already created Barbie for girls and He-Man for boys, solved both of those problems in one stroke with She-Ra: Princess Of Power.

She-Ra was He-Man's twin sister, Princess Adora, but this cartoon was anything but a carbon copy of Prince Adam's adventures. She-Ra was kidnapped as a child and raised by the evil Hordak, in comparison to Prince Adam's cosy upbringing in the Eternian Royal Palace. She-Ra had similar strength to He-Man, but she could also communicate with animals and heal people with her touch alone. She-Ra's sword could transform into tools and weapons while He-Man's sword could not. Throughout the series, She-Ra's sword turned into a shield, parachute, boomerang and a helmet, among other things.

Perhaps the biggest difference was that She-Ra benefited from hitting TV screens two years after He-Man did. Not only did She-Ra's outing benefit from a larger budget thanks to He-Man's success, but the writing was much stronger, with complex storylines as She-Ra led a rebellion against the Horde. The cartoon ended before she could successfully defeat the Horde, but she didn't have to. In winning the hearts and minds of young girls, She-Ra had already won the most important battle of them all.

◀ The first three episodes of She-Ra have a different opening, because her identity is still unknown. Once it's shown that Princess Adora is She-Ra and the full storyline is revealed, after three episodes, the cartoon then switches to the intro that we know and love today.

Information

Manufacturer: Mattel

First Released: 1985

Expect to pay: Show available free on Amazon Prime





He-Man (or Prince Adam) appears in the early episodes and makes sporadic appearances following that, but he never steals the limelight. In one episode he's even captured by Hordak, who is setting a trap for Princess Adora. Princess Adora has to become She-Ra to save him.

One big difference between She-Ra and He-Man is that She-Ra's sword serves more purposes. It can turn into different tools, such as a rope with a grappling hook, enabling her to escape tight spots that He-Man's sword wouldn't allow him to.

Even though She-Ra is powerful, she's still shown to be vulnerable and have flaws. In one episode she finds herself captured while saving elves from Catra and Grizzlor, leaving her pirate friend Sea Hawk to save the day.

The Legacy

She-Ra proved that girls are interested in more than dolls and ponies, and more importantly it proved that strong female characters belonged on the TV screen. Its success also arguably led to the cartoons like *Maxie's World* and *Jem and the Holograms*, while other cartoons like *Galaxy High* also had strong female characters in a leading role.



G.I. JOE

What was the world's first action figure? It was the toy that didn't want to be known as a doll. When Hasbro created G.I. Joe in 1964, a posable soldier with limbs that could be moved, it wanted to avoid using the word 'doll'. The thinking was that boys wouldn't play with dolls, because dolls were toys for girls. And so that word was never used by anyone at Hasbro when making or marketing its new toy. Instead, Hasbro described G.I. Joe as an 'action figure' and effectively created a new toy subgenre overnight, when G.I. Joe launched to explosive sales.

The first four G.I. Joe figures were marine, soldier, skipper and pilot. That's what made them relatable for boys living out their dream action scenarios through these figures. They were based on military experts

and top-of-their-field soldiers, rather than superheroes with unimaginable powers. You felt as though you could be G.I. Joe yourself, with an action appeal that no toy before it had for boys.

The backlash to the Vietnam War forced G.I. Joe away from its army roots and towards a more general 'action' range of figures, with kung-fu and eagle-eye variants. This lay the groundwork for an eventual relaunch in 1982, when G.I. Joe stormed back onto the shelves with new figures, vehicles and a new opponent in the form of Cobra Command. Even with the relaunch and the new gadgets, the appeal behind G.I. Joe was the same – it was an extraordinary man doing extraordinary things, that made young minds believe with enough training and dedication, anything is possible...

Information

Manufacturer: Hasbro

First Released: 1964

Current Manufacturer: Hasbro

Current Price: £35 (25th Anniversary Action Figure)



▶ The prototype G.I. Joes were known as Rocky (for the marine and soldier figurines), Skip (for the sailor) and Ace (for the pilot). A prototype was sold for \$200,000 in July 2003.

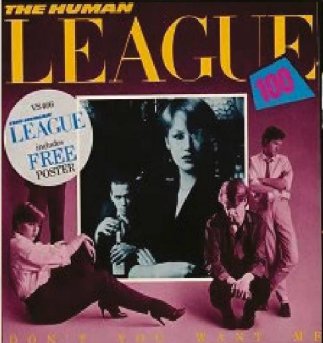
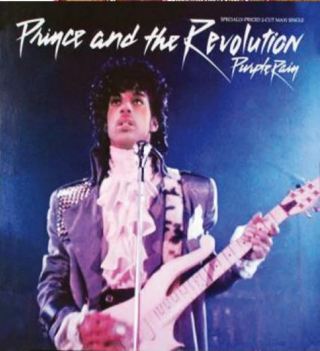
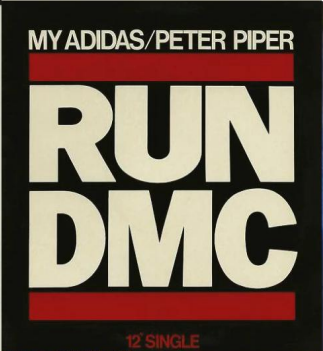
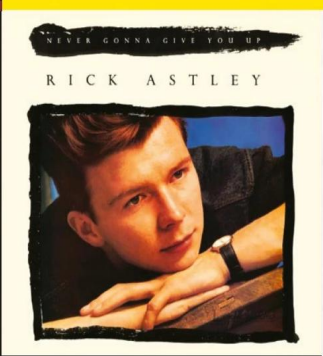
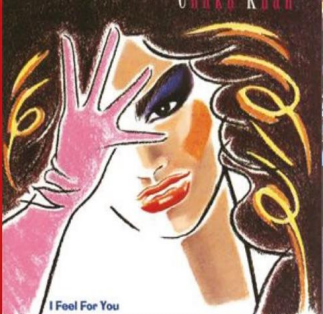
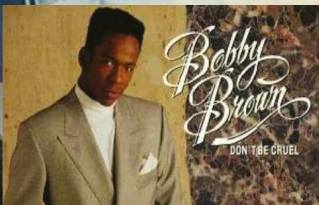
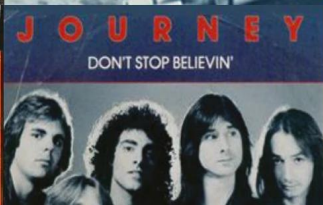
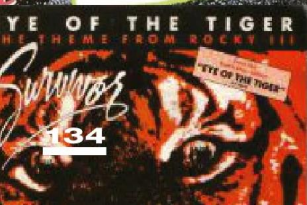
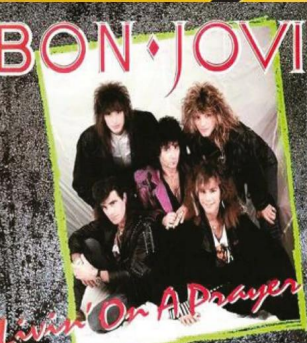
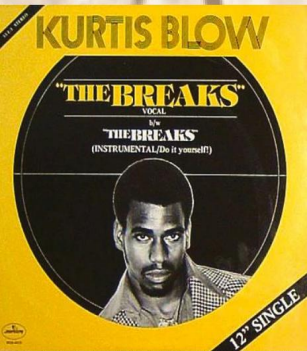
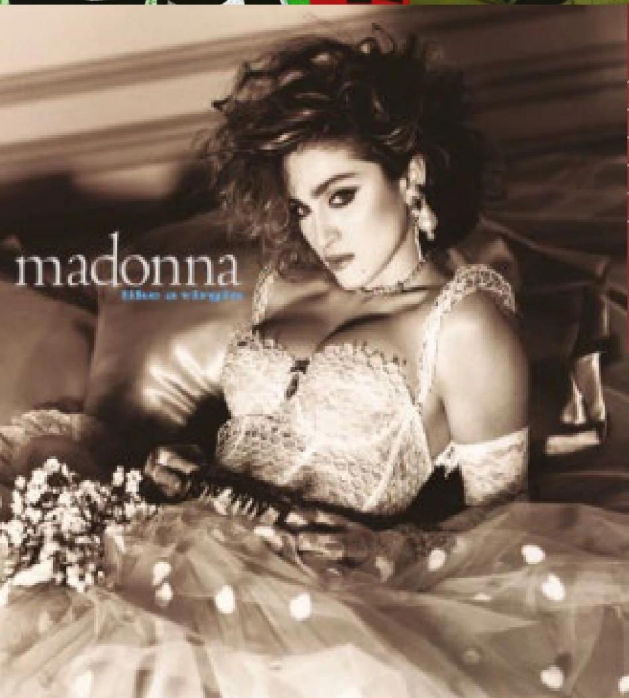
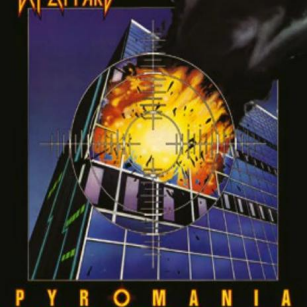
The Legacy

G.I. Joe is still going strong today, his battles against Cobra keeping him on shelves, in comics, and even on the cinema screen in recent times. G.I. Joe was inducted into National Toy Hall of Fame in 2003, joining the likes of Barbie, Etch-A-Sketch, and Rubik's Cube. The G.I. Joe line was also licensed to the UK where it became Action Man, and that also continues to sell well today.

▶ The name G.I. Joe comes from the military term G.I., which stands for Government Issue. 'G.I. Joe' itself is a term to describe a generic soldier, which was perfect for this action figure.

▶ The 12-inch figurine has posable limbs, just like dolls for girls did at the time. The idea was the figurine could crouch in a foxhole, stand to fire, and replicate other soldier moves. It had wire-spring joints and a hand-painted plastic head.

▶ The G.I. Joes had the necessary equipment you'd expect for a soldier, such as army boots, plastic combat helmet and a hip flask.





MUSIC OF A



GENERATION

An explosion of new styles and the rise of some of history's biggest stars made the Eighties an unforgettable decade in music

Greed. Glitz. Glamour. The 1980s was a time when music suddenly realised it could be bigger and better than everything else, as Reagan's USA was ushering a new ultra-capitalist age. While Gordon Gekko was telling us that "greed is good", we had basketball star Michael Jordan selling as many trainers as he was scoring points, and the modern Hollywood blockbuster took hold thanks to films like *ET* and the *Indiana Jones* series. It was inevitable that music would follow suit.

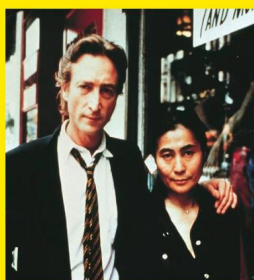
Pop reconfigured itself around the titanic talents of Michael Jackson and Madonna, who both knew how to use image to sell themselves and their music on a global stage. Heavy metal shook off its Seventies stylings and became much sleazier and more fun, with Guns N' Roses leading the charge.

In 1981, MTV began broadcasting 24 hours a day, rewarding bands like A-Ha who put as much stock into innovative music videos as they did their songs. But the Eighties wasn't just about old scenes evolving. It also saw

dance music take off, taking the nightclub baton from disco as Chicago gave birth to house music and Detroit ushered in techno.

Hip-hop carried on where The Sugarhill Gang left off, with Run DMC and De La Soul leading the way for 'positive' hip-hop. On the flip side, however, growing inner-city struggles led to gangsta rap taking hold, a firestorm of controversy following it. From fresh takes on old scenes to entirely new genres, the Eighties truly had it all. Perhaps greed was good after all...

EVENTS



John Lennon Killed

1980

The 1980s opened with the shocking news that former Beatle John Lennon had been killed, shot dead on his doorstep by a crazed fan. It wasn't just a music legend we lost that day. It was a sign of the darker side of celebrity, one that would inform how we saw musical artists throughout the Eighties, as they became more ubiquitous and larger than life.



MTV Begins Broadcasting

August 1981

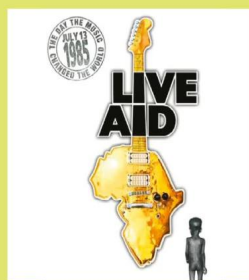
MTV's life began with a logo superimposed on the flag an astronaut is sticking into the moon. Rather fittingly, the first video played was Video Killed The Radio Star by The Buggles, a prophetic choice hinting at the groundbreaking influence and change that MTV would inspire in the industry. MTV itself would go on to become a media powerhouse, and remains so to this day.



Ronald Reagan co-opts 'Born In The USA'

1984

Bruce Springsteen's song was about a Vietnam veteran struggling with poverty, its "I was born in the USA" chorus a sarcastic thank-you to the nation. But Reagan used that chorus for his re-election campaign and, stripped of context, it sounded like a rousing anthem celebrating America. Bruce was appalled.



Live Aid Concert

1985

Live Aid saw Bob Geldof put on two concerts featuring all-star line-ups in order to raise money for charity. £50 million later, he could say job well done. But music had changed forever in the process. Millions tuned in worldwide to see acts like The Who, U2 and Duran Duran repackaged as schmaltzy showbiz entertainment for the benefit of TV broadcasts.



Madchester Is Born

1988

Dance music was born in Chicago and Detroit, but the scene would evolve in Manchester, England. Through the opening of new club Hacienda, nights featuring superstar DJs like Frankie Knuckles and bands like The Stone Roses and Happy Mondays, Manchester quickly reinvented itself as 'Madchester', home of hedonism and illegal raves.

POP

Pop in the Eighties belonged to two artists who refused to play by the rules: Michael Jackson and Madonna. It's hard to think of two musicians who have had a bigger impact on pop culture, as they were both acutely aware of the one change the Eighties ushered in that all pop artists had to be aware of – image. Michael Jackson became a larger-than-life celebrity while Madonna specialised in grabbing attention, both using their image to draw attention to their music. They were stars made for MTV and they realised having great songs is only part of the battle, as the Eighties changed the music landscape.

Pop music itself was transforming at a rapid pace and not just because of MTV and the new-found thirst for music videos. New technology meant pop had slicker production, crisper beats and could call on influences from other genres. Whether it was the synth-infused pop of The Human League, the reggae-influenced beats of UB40 or the drama of Ultravox, pop drew from more corners of the musical spectrum than ever before. The music felt exciting, fresh, fun and unpredictable.

ICONS



▲ Michael Jackson

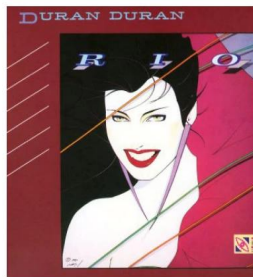
The King of Pop was at the height of his powers in the Eighties. Having left his cute adolescent persona behind, Michael Jackson waged a one-man war on the senses through his music, his singing, his dancing, his videos, his fashion, his live shows and his celebrity. *Thriller* had the songs, *Bad* had the attitude, the man himself had the ambition and drive to take music to a whole new level. Where Michael Jackson went, pop culture followed, and his star was big enough that everything else got pulled along by his irresistible gravity.

GREATEST HITS ALBUMS



Thriller Michael Jackson 1982

Make no mistake – *Thriller* revolutionised the entire music industry. Not only did its many singles reach the top of the charts, but its music videos, Michael Jackson's dancing, his unique outfits and the supporting live shows proved that music artists can be an assault on all senses, and not just the ears. It remains the best-selling album of all time.



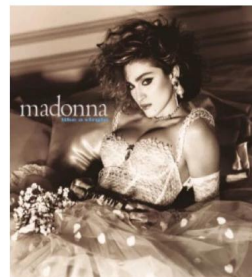
Rio Duran Duran 1982

Duran Duran had long worked out that the secret to succeeding in music during the Eighties wasn't just putting out great tunes. It was aspiration. With their devilish good looks, sharp suits and glamorous music videos, we wanted to be Duran Duran as much as we enjoyed listening to their new-wave assaults on the charts.



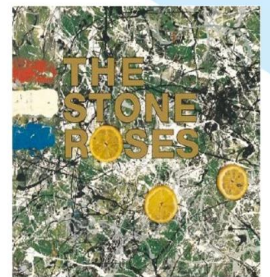
Songs From The Big Chair Tears For Fears 1985

As pop music lurched towards using more synthesizers and keyboards, Tears For Fears decided to zig rather than zag. Their hit record, *Songs From The Big Chair* put guitars at the forefront of their pop assaults on the charts, and the result is a considered, mature sound that has seen the album stand the test of time.



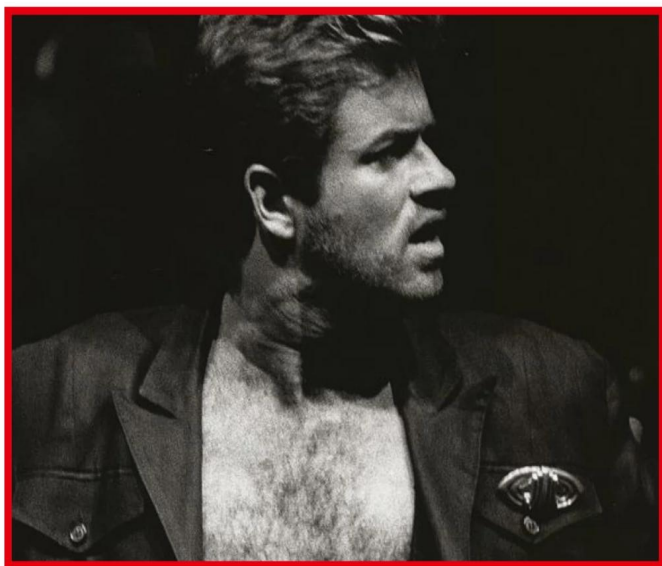
Like A Virgin Madonna 1984

From the infectious energy of *Holiday* (admittedly not on this album) to the money-over-men message of *Material Girl*, Madonna's songs all offered something different. But *Like A Virgin* sums her up better – naughty, borderline outrageous, executed with a cheeky wink and a smile that she knows she's tiptoeing a fine line.



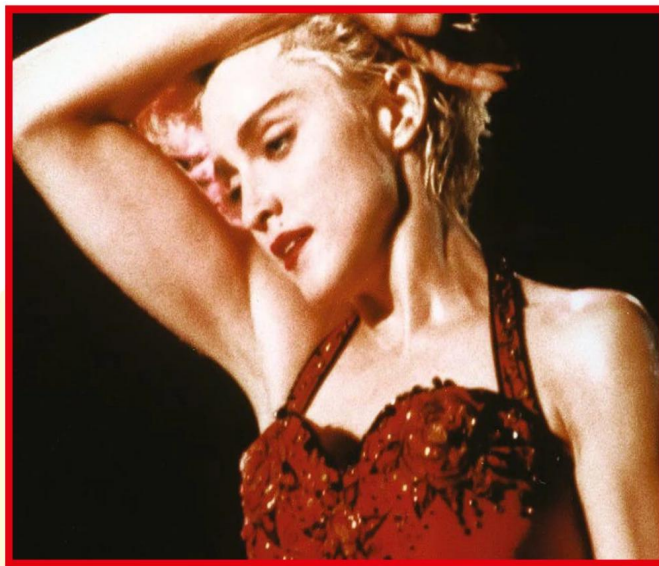
The Stone Roses The Stone Roses 1989

A sign of things to come, The Stone Roses would likely have kicked off the Britpop movement themselves had it not been for legal troubles with their record label. In any case, they set the template for Britpop with their unique combination of indie, pop choruses and sombre tales of everyday life.



▲ George Michael

George Michael didn't have to wait long for success. As one half of Wham, he found himself comfortable at the top of the charts, through singles like *Club Tropicana* and *Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go*. He proved there was more to his talent than high-energy party hits with his first solo release *Careless Whisper*, a saxophone-led song about a lost love, and that saw him launch a full solo career. What followed were collaborations with duets with Aretha Franklin (*I Knew You Were Waiting*), controversial releases that were banned from radio (*I Want Your Sex*) and a number one album (*Faith*).



▲ Madonna

When Madonna burst onto the scene, she completely rewrote what women were capable of in the music industry. A fiery mix of dance pop energy and self-confidence, Madonna sang about men, sex and money. The media were fascinated by her and wherever Madonna went, newspapers would follow, writing about her personal life and tour antics with feverish excitement. In turn, she would use the media to promote herself and her music, becoming the first artist to willingly use the power of celebrity to get her music to reach an even wider audience.

SONGS



Don't You Want Me

The Human League
1981

Has there ever been a darker pop song? This tale of longing after a lost love borders on menacing, but it's that sinister edge that makes *Don't You Want Me* so compelling. Phil Oakey and Susan Ann Sulley trading vocals to tell their own side of the story is a masterstroke, making it one of pop's best songs.



Running Up That Hill

Kate Bush
1985

A dreamy, ethereal song that seems to want to soar away up into the clouds rather than being tied down to earth. Kate Bush's alluring mystery and layered vocals add extra intrigue to a pop song that dared to be radically different, and it sounds every bit as enchanting now as it did in 1985.

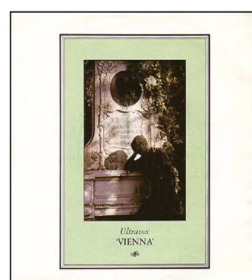


Take On Me

A-Ha

1985

The song that has ended many drunken karaoke nights, *Take On Me* was also a milestone moment for music videos. Its combination of live acting and pencil-sketch animation ensured that it received heavy rotation on the fledgling MTV, proving that innovative videos are another way to get your song in front of new audiences.

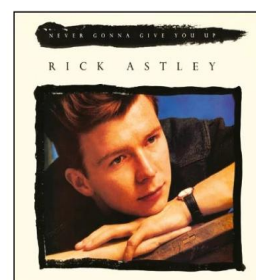


Vienna

Ultravox

1981

It should have been ridiculous. Its spare bursts of piano, operatic vocals and unpredictable song structure – all for a song about... Vienna? But Ultravox's most iconic track pulled all of these elements off with such confidence and panache that you can't help but get swept along by its vivid imagery and captivating drama.



Never Gonna Give You Up

Rick Astley

1987

It's guaranteed a place in pop culture infamy thanks to 'rickrolling', where people are tricked into watching the music video. But *Never Gonna Give You Up* was a massive hit in 1987, a number one in many countries. Is it an awesome or terrible song? Like many things Eighties, that's up to the individual...

ROCK

Rock in the Seventies had been dominated by two very different strands of the genre. In one corner, David Bowie was leading the glam rock charge, whose artists were pushing boundaries and image as far as they would go, almost an experiment to test how far the audience would come along with them on their journey. In the other corner, the likes of Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath were laying down thick, heavy riffs, their mystical lyrics taking listeners on a journey to heaven and hell.

The Eighties is where the two genres would finally meet as the rock and metal scene exploded, with hair metal being the defining genre of the time. It combined metal riffs with a carefully crafted image, moving away from the dungeons and demons themes metal had previously been plagued with to sing about girls and good times. Rock and metal finally became something most people could relate to.

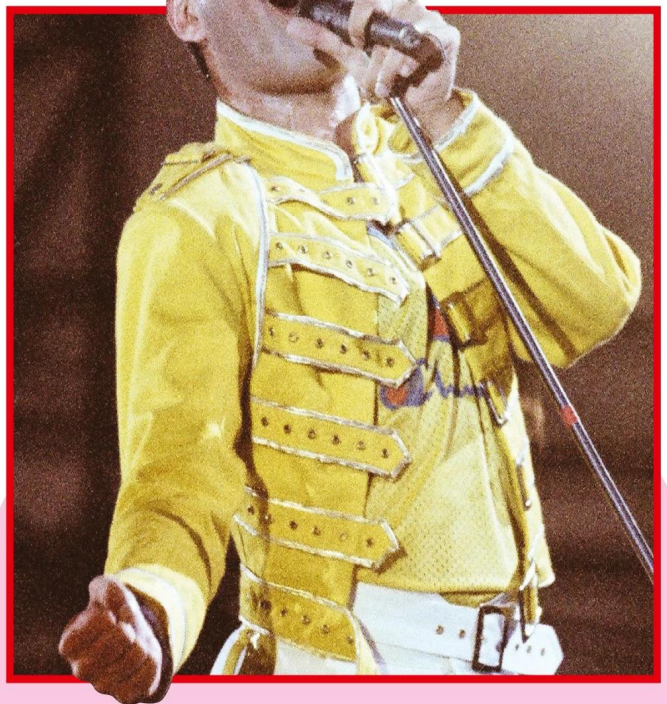
If anything, the rock and metal scene became splintered as it became commercial enough for different subgenres to emerge. Metallica dominated thrash, Iron Maiden kept old-school metal alive, U2 brought sensitivity to the genre, Guns N' Roses conquered the world.

ICONS



▲ Guns N' Roses

No band summed up the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll ethos quite like Guns N' Roses did. The LA-based band added an air of menace to the hair metal scene, making them an infinitely cooler and sexier alternative to bands like Ratt and Poison. Their live shows also quickly became legendary, leaving sold-out arenas across the world a sweaty, exhausted mess. But the real secret to their success was the brilliance of their songs, the likes of *Welcome to the Jungle* and *Sweet Child O' Mine* making the most of Slash's squealing guitar and Axl Rose's impossible vocals.



▲ Queen

Although Queen made their name in the 1970s, they transformed pop culture a decade later. Through songs like *Another One Bites The Dust*, events like Live Aid, David Bowie collaborations, and the unfortunate passing of the flamboyant Freddie Mercury, they were a band that dominated the airwaves and newspaper headlines. Queen had a huge hand in influencing music, celebrity and even fashion, as they effortlessly morphed from epic rock-opera masters to a band that consistently cranked out huge stadium hits.



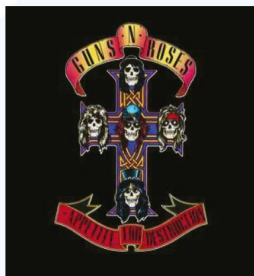
▲ Metallica

On the more extreme end of the rock scale, Metallica were becoming thrash metal legends throughout the Eighties. Their first four albums were hugely influential and shaped thrash metal, with 1986's *Master of Puppets* still considered the best in the genre. Although Metallica would go on to greater mainstream success a decade later with their self-titled album, it would sport a broader, commercial sound. Metallica's thrash metal success is almost entirely confined to the Eighties, with the genre itself fading to the background when Metallica themselves moved on.



GREATEST HITS

ALBUMS

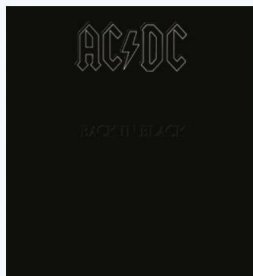


Appetite For Destruction

Guns N' Roses

1987

The album that rewrote all the rock rules. From the opening guitar attack of *Welcome to the Jungle*, with Axl Rose's distinctive howl swelling behind it, it's a perfect indicator of the chaos that's to come. Still regarded as one of the best albums ever made, Guns N' Roses would never top their ferocious debut.



Back In Black

AC/DC

1980

There was nothing complicated about AC/DC. The guitar riffs were hypnotic, the lyrics simple, the drumming like clockwork. But the songs were glorious, whisky-soaked tributes to nights out and good times. The fun oozed out of every chord and you couldn't help but get swept along by AC/DC's infectious enthusiasm.



The Joshua Tree

U2

1987

An incredible album that proves music can have power without necessarily needing heavy riffs to propel it. Written after the band toured the US, Bono wasn't afraid to bare his soul as he considered his place in the world, and that vulnerability informed the music just as much as it did his lyrics.



Pyromania

Def Leppard

1983

Def Leppard released two of the greatest rock albums in the 1980s: *Pyromania* and *Hysteria*. There's little to separate them. Both are full of anthems with catchy choruses, pounding riffs and are delivered by five good-looking lads from Sheffield with hair that could only have been considered cool in the Eighties.



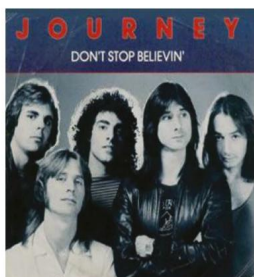
Number Of The Beast

Iron Maiden

1982

Death, taxes and Iron Maiden. The only thing that's changed with the British metal band is that their hair has gone steadily more grey over the years. Their sound, epic metal that sometimes verges on ridiculous rock opera, hasn't changed and *Number Of The Beast* saw them at the height of their powers.

SONGS

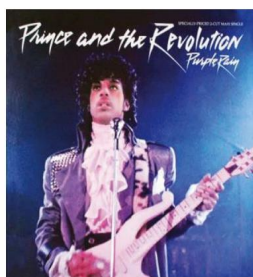


Don't Stop Believin'

Journey

1981

It's a slow-burner of a song, taking its time building up to its chorus with its boy-meets-girl tale. But once it hits the chorus, Journey unleash with everything they have – soaring guitar runs, dramatic piano and those vocals. It's still finding new audiences today, thanks to a cover by the cast of *Glee*.

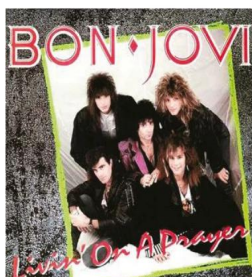


Purple Rain

Prince

1984

An artist so versatile he could fit into almost every musical category spread across these pages, Prince's *Purple Rain* is a perfect example of how it's difficult to pigeonhole the late, great musician. It's a timeless rock ballad that manages to be both soft and sensual without sacrificing any of its power, as dramatic and vital as it is easy to listen to.



Livin' On A Prayer

Bon Jovi

1986

"Tommy used to work on the docks..." So starts Bon Jovi's biggest and most iconic hit, which builds to a chorus with a high note that everyone tries (and fails) at karaoke. It's no surprise the song has become such a karaoke hit, as it's Jon Bon Jovi's driving vocals that really make it an all-time classic anthem.

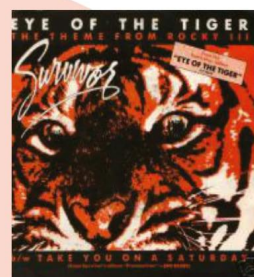


Jump

Van Halen

1984

What's unusual about this rock song is that the dominant instrument is a keyboard, more unusual still given that Eddie Van Halen's trademark is teasing impossible notes from his guitar. But the unique take on a rock song, relentless energy and catchy "go ahead and jump!" chorus all come together perfectly to make this a classic.



Eye Of The Tiger

Survivor

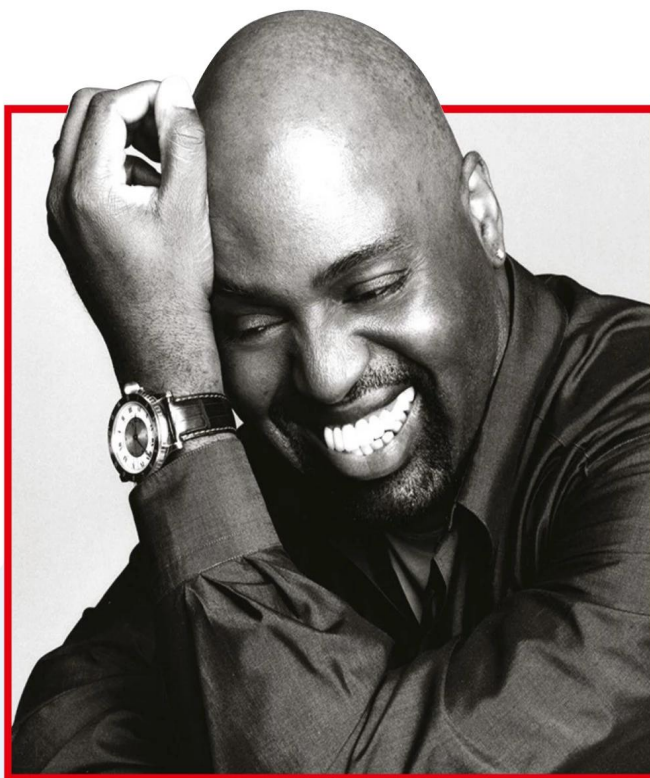
1982

If it's good enough for Rocky, it's good enough for us. A driving, thumping, air-punching number, *Eye of the Tiger* chugs along with its relentless rhythm and pounding bass to get your foot tapping. It was originally written for *Rocky III*, hence why the lyrics are about the thrill of the fight and surviving.

ELECTRONIC

E DM. Trance. Techno. Drum and bass. House. Dubstep. Whatever electronic music you're into, it all started in the Eighties. The advent of bass synthesizers and programmable drum machines led to new forms of music filling nightclubs where disco's popularity had finally started to fade, the rhythmic beats of America's new house and techno scenes keeping dance floors busy. Alongside the growing hip-hop culture found in New York, names like Frankie Knuckles and Derrick May proved DJs could become household names as they became the first well-known club DJs.

It wasn't just the underground dance scene that was discovering new music, either. As synthesizers and keyboards became more common, pop music began to take note and incorporate these new, unusual sounds into their work. This gave rise to the likes of Pet Shop Boys, New Order and Gary Numan, who fused the cold, steely sounds of electronic music to pop's warm heart. The result was a flood of music in the pop charts that you could dance to, powered by keyboards and drum machines. With personal computers, VCRs, Walkmans and game consoles all taking off in the Eighties, music's fascination with technology mirrored ours as a society.



▲ Frankie Knuckles

Modern house music can be traced back to Frankie Knuckles. Known as 'The Godfather of House Music', this Chicago DJ effectively created the genre in the mid-Eighties and tirelessly promoted it. He combined the funky bass and soaring vocals of disco with hard drum machine beats he created with a drum machine. He called this new musical style 'house', named after the Warehouse club where he was the resident DJ. The popularity of house soon spread from its native Chicago to the rest of the US, to the UK, and eventually the world.

ICONS



▲ Kraftwerk

Given its sparse and industrial sound, techno sounds like the sort of music genre that would have been created in a lab, perhaps a by-product of Skynet's attempts to build the Terminator. The truth is far less exciting. Techno's birth was a Detroit high-school, where three students were inspired to create the genre's ominous and claustrophobic 4/4 beats by Kraftwerk's music. Kraftwerk's influence spread further than the birth of techno, though. The German synth-pop group also brought new standards for live shows, group concepts, futuristic sounds and pushing the boundaries of what music technology can create.



▲ Pet Shop Boys

Existing in the overlap between 'dance' and 'pop' on the musical Venn diagram, Pet Shop Boys welded both genres together as though it was the most normal thing in the world. The end result was tunes that existed just as comfortably in nightclubs as they did on daytime radio, appealing to a broad spectrum of music fans. In 1985 they scored a number-one in the UK, US and elsewhere with *West End Girls*, following it up with a raft of hit singles in the Eighties, including *It's a Sin*, *Always On My Mind* and *Heart*. More hits followed in the Nineties and their career has continued right up to the present day.



GREATEST HITS

ALBUMS

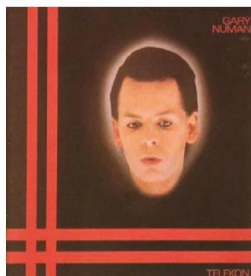


Computer World

Kraftwerk

1981

Kraftwerk were veterans by this point, *Computer World* being their eighth album, and it's here that their ambition really took flight. Songs about the rise of computers, international releases in different languages, and an alien sound that left others following in their wake. Now considered one of the Eighties' best.

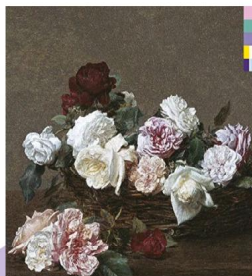


Telekon

Gary Numan

1980

The final album from what Numan himself dubbed the 'machine' part of his career, *Telekon* brought guitars back to work alongside his robotic, synthetic sound. Most of all, *Telekon* proves that singers don't have to be singers, as Numan's voice shone in short, sharp, android-like attacks such as on the chorus for *We Are Glass*.

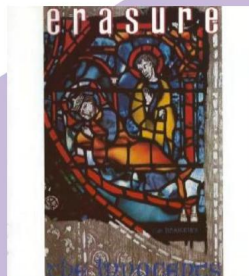


Power, Corruption & Lies

New Order

1983

Following their *Movement* album, New Order dug even further into the electronic scene, their love for keyboards and catchy beats bringing rock energy to the dance scene. There was a warmth to *Power, Corruption & Lies* that dance records sometimes lacked, which helped win new fans.



The Innocents

Erasure

1988

If you could make a pure pop album using instruments lifted from dance music, *The Innocents* is probably what it would sound like. Opening track *A Little Respect* became the duo's biggest hit, with its titanic pop chorus wrapped up in a maelstrom of keyboards and drum machine beats that builds before the brilliant falsetto release.



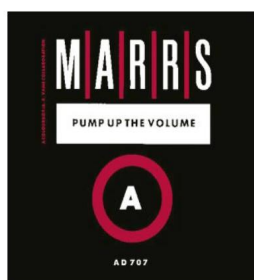
Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret

Soft Cell

1981

A brash album that had both feet planted in clubland, everything about Soft Cell's best-known work screams Eighties, from the album cover to the awful album title. That's part of its charm nowadays – it works as a perfect snapshot of dance music's growing influence and what the scene was like at that time.

SONGS



Pump Up The Volume

MARRS

1987

It's simple and that's why it works. *Pump Up The Volume* is a straightforward dance-floor beat, but it's the mayhem that surrounds it that gives this song its killer edge. DJ scratching, distorted sirens, piano chords and chopped up vocal samples all compete for the spotlight simultaneously on this completely manic track.

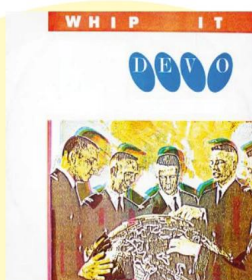


Planet Rock

Afrika Bambaataa

1982

Although it wasn't a huge hit, this underground hip-hop tune paved the way for much of the electronic music that would follow in the Eighties, particularly techno and house. It was the Roland TR-808 drum machine that gave the song its distinct sound and led to the proliferation of '808 beats' that would power electronic music for decades after.



Whip It

Devo

1980

There's something very silly and very strange about Devo's unusual mixture of humour and dance-floor beats, but that's why this song works. *Whip It* is cheeky and sounds like it's been beamed here from another world. It's perhaps fitting that you're more likely to sing along to the Minimoog synthesizer riff than the chorus.

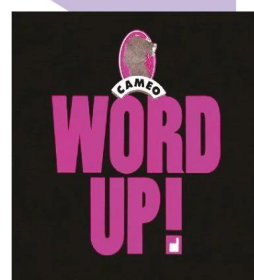


Can You Feel It?

The Jacksons

1981

A bouncy, buoyant song, *Can You Feel It?* represents an important moment in music. It sounds like the last hurrah by disco, one last party before it's consumed by dance music. As such, it can't help but let some of dance's influences seep in, a potent cocktail which only adds to the feverish energy of the track.



Word Up!

Cameo

1986

Cameo brought street-smart rapping to the dance rhythm of *Word Up!*, an unusual genre crossover that worked perfectly. The same can't be said for the music video, however, which featured various Lycra-clad dancers in American ghettos – not quite representative of what was happening in these locations at the time...

HIP-HOP

If hip-hop took root in the Seventies, then the Eighties is when it really found its voice. Turntables and a microphone were much easier to afford than guitars and drums, leading to block parties in the US where DJs would play beats for rappers to battle each other on microphones. DJs eventually used two turntables to keep beats seamlessly playing for rappers, a setup that has mostly survived to this day. Eventually their turntable skill led to scratching – the distinctive sound of pushing records back and forth against the needle.

The first big names in hip-hop included Grandmaster Flash, Doug E Fresh and Kurtis Blow, all specialising in uplifting hip-hop that took its bass-heavy cues from the disco scene that preceded it.

As the Eighties drew to a close, a new form of hip-hop emerged – gangsta rap. This focused on the violent side of inner-city life. Led by N.W.A. and Ice-T, this controversial form of music was accused by the media of promoting crime, violence, racism and drug use, among others. However, as is often the case, media outrage only served to make this brand of hip-hop even more popular and a new era of rap was born.

ICONS

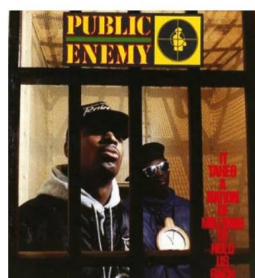


Public Enemy

Hip-hop in the '70s was upbeat fare by The Sugarhill Gang and Grandmaster Flash. Public Enemy rewrote the genre rules, using politically charged rap songs to attack anyone from the government to Hollywood to radio. It wasn't just that Chuck D's message was powerful. With sirens, rock guitar, James Brown samples and Terminator X's DJ scratching all competing for volume, the music was chaotic, shocking and thrilling. No hip-hop band felt as important before Public Enemy or since, nor has any ever felt quite as dangerous.

GREATEST HITS

ALBUMS



It Takes A Nation of Millions To Hold Us Back

Public Enemy

1988

Full of angry anthems that called out racism, corrupt governments and music industry exploitation, Chuck D's vocals added tension to the sonic chaos while Flava Flav's comedic ad-libs added temporary relief.



Paid In Full

Eric B & Rakim

1987

Rakim's work on *Paid in Full* changed rapping forever, as he used internal rhyme and a considered style to deliver a relaxed, considered alternative to the high-energy shouting of LL Cool J and Chuck D. Eric B's sample-heavy approach set the stage perfectly for Rakim's innovative rap delivery, which was deliberate, pointed and almost jazz-like.

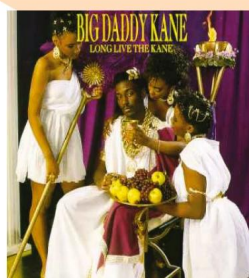


3 Feet High And Rising

De La Soul

1989

While gangsta rap's messages of violence and drugs were beginning to overshadow hip-hop, De La Soul stayed the course with their light, happy rhythms on *3 Feet High and Rising*. The record helped prove that there was enough room in the genre for both approaches to hip-hop to coexist.

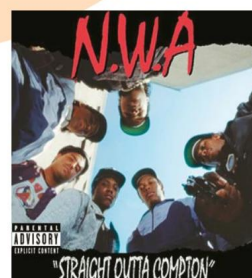


Long Live The Kane

Big Daddy Kane

1988

Big Daddy Kane's debut influenced a generation of rappers from Nas to The Notorious B.I.G. to Wu-Tang Clan's RZA, who all sampled his lyrics. It's now considered one of the best records to have emerged from hip-hop's golden era, with Big Daddy Kane's lyrical prowess and rapping skills the highlights.

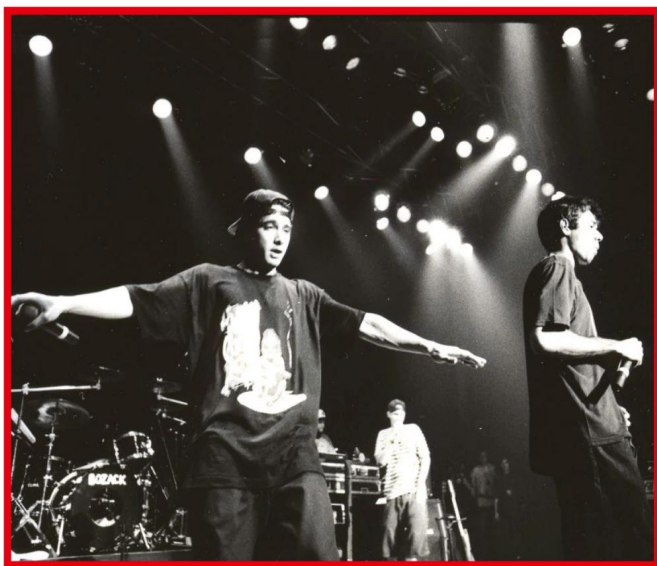


Straight Outta Compton

N.W.A.

1989

Ferocious and dangerous, *Straight Outta Compton* is the album that kicked the doors wide open for gangsta rap. Its blaring sirens, gunshots and furious vocals shocked audiences around the world – some for the better, and some for the worse. Its influence is still being felt today, such as in Britain's grime music.



▲ Beastie Boys

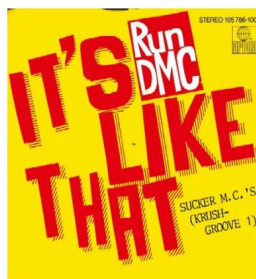
Beastie Boys started life as a hardcore punk band before reinventing themselves as rap party boys, eventually touring with Run DMC and LL Cool J. Their first full rap album, *Licensed to Ill*, became the bestselling album in the genre in the Eighties, propelled by singles *(You Gotta) Fight For Your Right (To Party!)* and *No Sleep till Brooklyn*. Having fully escaped their hardcore punk roots, the Beastie Boys returned to the studio and emerged with a mature sound on *Paul's Boutique*. The sample-heavy approach won critics over and it's considered one of the best albums of the Eighties.



▲ Run DMC

Run DMC stamped their mark on the Eighties with their distinctive sound, look and personalities. The band was made up of two MCs ('Run' and 'D.M.C.') and a DJ ('Jam Master Jay'), proving that you didn't have to be one or the other in order to find success. With their gold chains, fedoras and all-black ensemble, there was no mistaking how they looked either. Their self-titled debut was rough around the edges, but its collection of catchy songs saw Run DMC burrow their way into the music mainstream. Along the way, they helped establish hip-hop as a force to be reckoned with.

SONGS



It's Like That

Run DMC

1984

The rough production on this track couldn't hold back the pure, unadulterated energy of Run and DMC trading rhymes about making money and getting through life. Even though it sounds spare today, *It's Like That* was one of the defining hip-hop songs of the era, showing how message and music could work together to create an exceptional overall package.

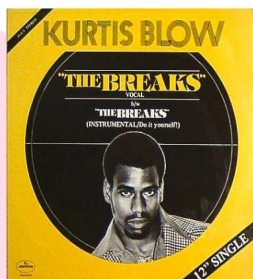


(You Gotta) Fight For Your Right (To Party!)

Beastie Boys

1986

The frat-boy anthem of the '80s, *Fight For Your Right* caught Beastie Boys between their hardcore punk roots and newfound hip-hop style, with the raw energy of both genres. There was nothing clever or smart about this song, but it was a *lot* of fun.



The Breaks

Kurtis Blow

1980

A song that pointedly kept one foot in the dying disco era, *The Breaks* has hand claps, funky bass and crowds cheering. Tying all those elements together is Kurtis Blow's rapping, with infectious energy that lifts the song and has made it a mainstay on party playlists ever since its release. Put it on now, decades later, and it's near impossible not to start moving.



The Message

Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five

1982

"It's like a jungle sometimes, it makes me wonder how I keep from going under." *The Message* marked an important moment in hip-hop. It proved there was more to the genre than party anthems, as it highlighted the realities of everyday inner-city life ("junkies in the alley with a baseball bat").



Hip Hop, Be Bop (Don't Stop)

Man Parrish

1982

One of the big releases in the early years of hip-hop, it doesn't have any rapping, with sparse vocals and a "don't stop" sample punctuating the song. However, its woozy mix of disco bass, electrobeats and keyboards set an early template for others in the genre to follow.

R&B

Rhythm and blues, known as R&B, has evolved more than any other genre. Even its meaning has evolved, depending on the era. It covered everything from soul and gospel music to bands like The Rolling Stones and The Who. By the time the Eighties arrived, R&B was considered a blanket term for soul, funk and disco, particularly as the arrival of hip-hop began to squeeze R&B from a strong commercial genre into something more niche with only a few shining lights truly breaking through.

There were the old guard whose careers were already established and had to reinvent themselves to stay relevant, such as Aretha Franklin going for a younger sound with *Who's Zoomin' Who?*, Chaka Khan bringing dance influence into her music and Marvin Gaye severing his ties with Motown.

But it was the new artists coming through who made R&B exciting in the Eighties – Whitney Houston, Luther Vandross, Bobby Brown, Mariah Carey. Whether you considered it to be soul, funk, disco or something else entirely, there was no denying the talents of those singers.

ICONS



▲ Whitney Houston

Describe Whitney Houston as the greatest female vocalist of all time and the only argument you'd get (if any) would probably be from ardent Mariah Carey fans. Music producers quickly realised that her songs shouldn't be complex numbers with awkward tempo changes and structure but rather, should serve as platforms for Houston to show off her incredible vocal range that few could match. That same thinking extended to her music videos, live performances and image – put the focus on her incredible voice and let that do the work. A true diva who is sadly missed.



▲ Marvin Gaye

Marvin Gaye was already a household name before the Eighties, thanks to his work as a young singer on Motown hits like *I Heard It Through the Grapevine*. By the early Eighties he had moved away from his roots to become an influential voice in R&B, releasing *Midnight Love* and its huge single *Sexual Healing*. He would hit the headlines again a few years later when he was killed by his own father. But while his career was cut short, he still played a huge role in shaping R&B, helping it evolve into the genre we know today.



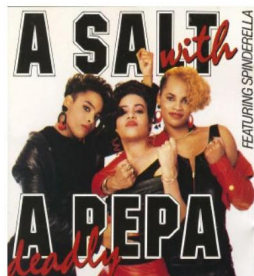
▲ Salt-N-Pepa

The trio – two rappers and a DJ – started life as one of the first ever all-female rap groups, becoming one of the few female voices in a genre that was increasingly lurching towards objectification and incessant male bragging. Having established themselves in hip-hop through their breakout single *Push It*, Salt-N-Pepa dialled back the energy and became just as well known for their superb R&B output through songs like *Shake Your Thang*. Without the influential Salt-N-Pepa paving the way, it's debatable whether we would have had groups like TLC and Destiny's Child.



GREATEST HITS

ALBUMS

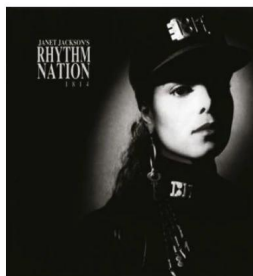


A Salt With A Deadly Pepa

Salt-N-Pepa

1988

This was the album that proved there was more to Salt-N-Pepa than just a hit single. *Shake Your Thang* and *Get Up Everybody* (Get Up) were R&B hits through and through, establishing the trio as the prototype female R&B group for SWV and Destiny's Child to later follow.

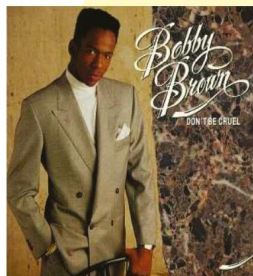


Rhythm Nation: 1814

Janet Jackson

1989

The album that finally saw her known as Janet Jackson rather than simply being Michael's sister, it touched on a variety of musical styles, from new jack swing to industrial dance. Janet Jackson's voice was the glue that held all these musical ideas together, and *Rhythm Nation* remains her best work.



Don't Be Cruel

Bobby Brown

1988

When his debut album stalled in the charts, Bobby Brown decided to shed his bubblegum image for the follow-up *Don't Be Cruel*. The new aggression, raw sex appeal and subtle air of menace in his demeanour made the album an instant hit, while single *My Prerogative* became his first number one.



Break Out

Pointer Sisters

1983

On the biggest album of their illustrious career, the Pointer Sisters brought an electro influence into their music which managed to mesh perfectly with their established R&B work. Unsurprisingly, almost every single from this album was a hit, from *Jump (For My Love)* to a remix of *I'm So Excited*.



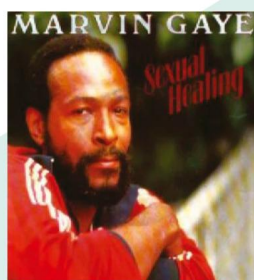
Who's Zoomin' Who?

Aretha Franklin

1985

It'd be easy to assume Aretha Franklin would start to take her foot off the gas for *Who's Zoomin' Who?*, what was then her 33rd studio album. Instead, it became the most successful album of her career, as she proved beyond all doubt that there was plenty of life left in her iconic vocals.

SONGS

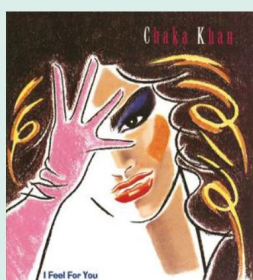


Sexual Healing

Marvin Gaye

1982

The buttery smooth vocals of Marvin Gaye make any of his songs a joy to listen to, but no song was bigger or more joyful, then or now, than *Sexual Healing*. Marvin Gaye exposed his soul and we all fell in love, the slow jam of the track itself being the perfect vehicle for his incredible voice.



I Feel For You

Chaka Khan

1984

I Feel For You shows how music was being drawn into the irresistible pull of the developing electronic scene. It brought the best elements of R&B together with electronic music's decidedly more clinical production, Chaka Khan's powerful voice the key element, bringing the two disparate styles together with consummate ease.

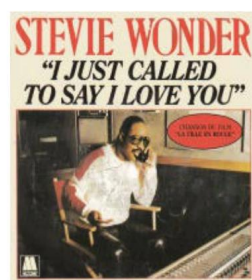


The Greatest Love Of All

Whitney Houston

1986

Whitney Houston had already found success with songs like *Saving All My Love for You* but this was the song that announced her as an elite talent to the world. It was a slow number, where production stood aside while Houston's powerful vocals carried her onto radio airwaves around the world.



I Just Called To Say I Love You

Stevie Wonder

1984

Stevie Wonder's distinctive brand of music draws on so many elements – R&B, Motown, swing, pop. Yet no matter how many influences he brings together, he manages to blend them into a smooth whole, as he effortlessly proves on this song.

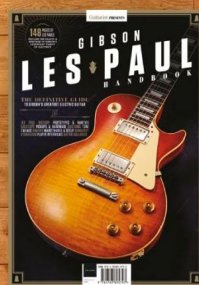
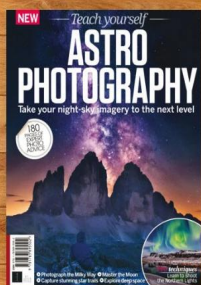
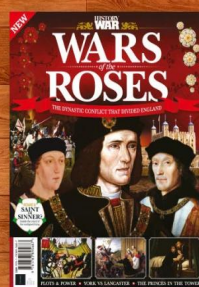
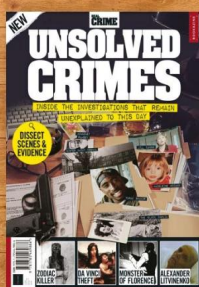


Girl You Know It's True

Milli Vanilli

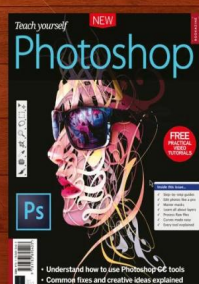
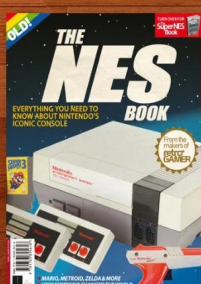
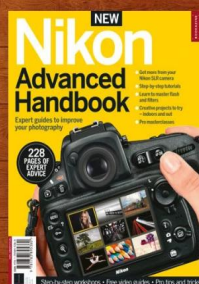
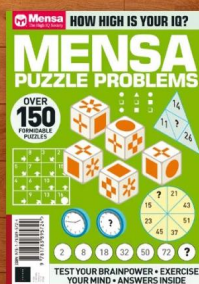
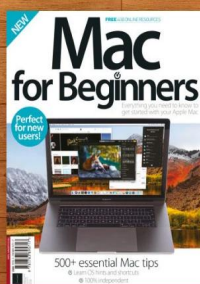
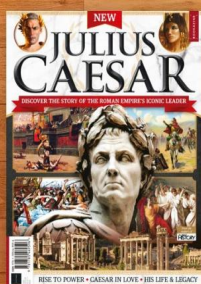
1988

The song that showed the changing landscape of the music industry, the track skipped during a live performance and exposed the fakery behind the duo. Lip-synching nowadays barely raises an eyebrow, but back then it felt like we had caught a magician out mid-trick.



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From Back to the Future to Star Wars, revisit the best blockbusters of the 80s